

M. N. ROY

OUR DIFFERENCES

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PREFACE

I was connected with the Communist International practically ever since its foundation in 1919. The principles of the programme, organisation and tactics of the World Communist Party were laid down in the Second Congress held in 1920. I was present in that historic gathering, and took a leading part in the framing of its resolutions, particularly that on the National and Colonial Question. On that occasion, I differed with Lenin regarding the rôle of the nationalist bourgeoisie in the revolutionary movement in colonial countries. The resolution of the Second World Congress tentatively incorporated both the views. In course of time, the view that in the colonial countries the bourgeoisie cannot play a revolutionary rôle, was borne out by experience. I had advocated that view from the very beginning.

In 1929, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International abandoned the tactics of united front, although the situation did not warrant such an abrupt change of policy. In pursuance of the general policy then adopted, the Sixth World Congress passed a resolution advising the Communists in India to abandon the line followed until then. They were asked to get out of the Indian National Congress, which was roundly condemned as a counter-revolutionary organisation of the nationalist bourgeoisie. They were advised to organise the workers and peasants in the struggle for the establishment of a Soviet Republic under proletarian dictatorship. The pro-

letariat was to be regarded as the only revolutionary class, and the anti-imperialist struggle was to be organised under its leadership.

Owing to illness, I was not present at the Sixth World Congress. I disagreed not only with the resolution about India, but with the entire ultra-left policy inaugurated by the Sixth Congress. But for the sake of discipline, I kept quiet. During the discussion of the Indian question in the Sixth Congress, utterly unfounded charges were made against me. The object was to give some plausible excuse for my removal from the leadership of the Communist International.* I

*I was a victim of some internal intrigue, the history of which had better not yet be written publicly. The desire of the Communist Party of Great Britain to establish its protectorate over the Indian Communist movement had a good deal to do with it. The internal struggle of the Russian Communist Party also contributed to my victimisation. One fact may be mentioned here. For the first time in the history of the Communist International, there appeared an Indian delegation in the Sixth World Congress. Previously, in spite of repeated efforts, no *bona fide* Communist from India could reach Moscow. The object of the first Indian delegation to the Communist International was to denounce me, obviously in accordance with a previously laid plan. Corroborating the reports of some British Communists, who had previously paid flying visits to India, the mysterious delegation told the Congress of the Communist International that I was a person completely unknown in India, having had no connection whatsoever with the revolutionary movement. The interesting fact, however, is that only one member of the delegation was allowed to return to India. It is reported that the rest were presently suspected of being British spies and dealt with as such. The one who returned to India has dropped out of politics altogether.

thought it wise to ignore the intrigue against me personally. But I could not overlook the serious harm that the new policy was bound to do. Nor could I permit the theoretical criticism levelled against me to go unchallenged. Therefore, I submitted to the Executive of the Communist International a comprehensive statement of my views, with the object of showing that the criticism levelled against me was utterly unfounded. No notice was ever taken of that document. On the contrary, a year later, in a plenary session of the Executive, it was declared that I had put myself outside the International, because I had written some articles criticising certain adventurist action of the German Communist Party.

Since then, much has been whispered, talked and speculated about my "expulsion" from the Communist International. Those who claim to be the defenders of orthodox Communism in this country, believed it to be their revolutionary duty to carry on a vicious propaganda against me for years. But the controversy was

Some Communists in this country spread the whisper that I was expelled from the Communist International for some horrible crime committed in China. That was a campaign of he carried on either maliciously or by those woefully ignorant about the situation. However, that ghost has been laid. This part of the story has been told in my book "My Experiences in China," (Renaissance Publishing Co., Bombay). But it is no longer necessary for me to tell the story. It is recorded in recently published books written by official Communists residing in Moscow, for example "China's Millions" by Anna Louise Strong, published in 1936. Besides, the decisive fact is that there does not exist a single document of the Communist International in which I am accused of having done anything improper in China.

concluded already two years ago. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International revised the ruinous policy inaugurated by the previous Congress, for disagreeing with which I, together with other old Communists, were condemned as "renegades". I completely agree with the resolutions of the Seventh World Congress. This being the case, as far as I am concerned, the controversy is closed ; there are no differences any longer. Yet, for some reason unknown to me, the Communist Party of India still carries on the crusade against me. Therefore, I think that the time has come when the history of the controversy should be written. And that will be best done in the form of a collection of all the documents in that connection. I have chosen that method so that it may not be contended that I have changed my position. I do not withdraw one single word of what I wrote in the past. The careful reader will notice that political and social developments in India have taken place exactly as I visualised nearly ten years ago. It was in the light of that perspective, opened up before me by the understanding of Marxism, that I advocated a tactical line so very different from that recommended by the Sixth World Congress.

The most important document of the collection is the statement "On the Indian Question in the Sixth World Congress of the C. I." The so-called theory of de-colonisation, for which I have been so much castigated by those who do not have the slightest idea of what they are talking about, is treated therein. The document was written at the end of 1929. I purposely refrain from supplementing it by adding up-to-date statistical material. I do not do so because I wish to be judged by what I actually did say. If it is supplemented

by up-to-date statistical materials and a record of political developments during the intervening years, the document will be much more convincing. It is convincing as it was written originally. Therefore, I leave it in that original form.

Unfortunately, one important document is missing. The so-called theory of de-colonisation was originally formulated in that document. I wrote it in Moscow, and left it there. But in the statement submitted to the Executive of the Communist International after the Sixth Congress, I quoted the relevant portions from that document in order to show that it did not lay me open to all the wild charges made against me, on the evidence supposed to be provided by it. In that statement, I challenged the Executive of the Communist International to publish that document. I am repeating that challenge. The document must be in the archives of the Communist International.

I am sure that the publication of these documents will once for all clear the confusion purposely created by those interested in maligning and defaming me.

In course of the controversy, my views came to be known as "Royism" which was meant, by the coiners of the term, to be a term of abuse. Since the term has become current, it had better be explained what it really stands for. With that purpose, two articles by my friend and co-worker, V. B. Karnik, are included in the collection. Besides, they also summarise the whole controversy as it took place in India, and show how it is being artificially kept up even after all the real differences have disappeared. The unprejudiced reader will see that those who came to scoff have stayed to pray : The insane crusade against "Royism" is being carried on by

those who should practice what that still condemn, if they wish to be loyal adherents of the Communist International as they claim to be. It will be seen that the credit really belongs to the "Royists". It is they who are putting into practice the revolutionary policy recommended by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, while the so-called Communist Party of India still finds it difficult to live down the tradition of ultra-leftism. They can do so because they had themselves formulated the policy, long before the present leaders of the Communist International realised that this was the only correct policy, and recommended it to the Indian Communists.

June 1938.

M. N. Roy

PART ONE

OUR DIFFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

There is so much talk about left-wing unity. I have been asked repeatedly what stands in the way to unity of those who all profess to have the same goal. Why cannot all the Socialists and Communists work together? Why have I become the object of a campaign of vilification conducted by certain left-wing groups? I began Communist propaganda in this country when Communism and Socialism were strange terms. I was the first to introduce Marxian thought in this country. Yet, I have been denounced as "renegade to Communism," "traitor to the working class" and even an "agent of Imperialism." Naturally, well-meaning people are perplexed. They come to me for explanation instead of addressing themselves to the proper place. However, I shall once again set forth the reasons of the dissensions in the radical ranks. They are based on theoretical differences which, naturally, lead to political and tactical differences.

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In 1928, the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International advised its Indian section to adopt a course of action which, in my opinion, was erroneous. It was the result of a wrong estimation of the social character and the perspective of the development of the Indian revolution. The majority of the Indian Communists, labouring under a false notion of discipline, accepted the resolution of the Communist International. The resolution characterised the Indian National Congress as the counter-revolutionary party of the bourgeoisie and advised the Indian Communists to denounce all the nationalist leaders, including left-wingers like Jawaharlal Nehru, as agents of Imperialism. The mechanical acceptance of the resolutions of the Communist International blinded the Indian Communists to the realities of the situation, and compelled them to commit tactical mistakes which isolated them from the anti-imperialist mass movement and even from the labour movement. Thanks to those mistakes, they could never be more than a small sect with no influence on the political life of the country. They gave out fantastic slogans and advocated absurd plans of action.

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Convinced of the harmfulness of that sectarian policy, I believed it to be my revolutionary duty to oppose it. I was actuated by the following considerations. A revolution cannot be made to order. Revolutionaries should be guided by the realities of the situation. The young Indian proletariat being numerically weak, immature as a class, politically inexperienced, culturally backward, ideologically uneducated, cannot shoulder single-handed the task of overthrowing Imperialism and carrying through a great revolution. In order to play its rôle creditably, the proletariat should take up its proper place in the constellation of the revolutionary forces in the given situation.

The bourgeois democratic revolution is still to take place in India. The social changes brought about by it are necessary for the progress and the prosperity of the society as a whole. All the social groups, excepting the feudal aristocracy and the associated groups, are interested in that revolution. Being, for the period, culturally the most advanced class, and directly concerned with the social transformation, the urban middle class (bourgeoisie), normally become the

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leader of the revolution. But they can carry it through only with the active support of the oppressed and exploited masses. In India, the delayed bourgeois democratic revolution cannot take place in its classical form. The bourgeoisie has forfeited the right to lead it. But the task of the revolution remains to be accomplished. The forces of the revolution are all there. Only the bourgeoisie has deserted them. There must, consequently, be a new type of leadership. But that would not essentially change the social character of the revolution.

The character of a revolution is determined by the social forces involved in it. The leadership devolves upon different classes in different periods of history. It may also be influenced by the peculiar structure of society in the throes of the revolution. As a matter of fact, in the successive stages of its development, even the classical type of the bourgeois revolution in Europe was led by classes other than the bourgeoisie proper. Practically nowhere did the prosperous urban middle class (merchants, manufacturers, bankers etc.) take an active leading part in the revolutionary struggle, although the

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fruits of victory were everywhere monopolised by them. Indeed, wherever the bourgeois democratic revolution became completely successful, as in France for example, it had to overwhelm the resistance of the big bourgeoisie. The leadership of the French revolution had to pass from the Girondists to the Jacobins before it could overthrow monarchy and destroy feudalism. The Jacobins represented the urban lower middle class,—indigent intellectuals, poor students, artisans, small traders etc.

The inability and unwillingness of the big bourgeoisie to lead a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom, and the far-reaching social transformation necessary for it, is not a peculiar feature of the Indian revolution. It is a mistake to hold that the simple and not unprecedented fact of the defection of the big bourgeoisie alters the character of the impending social revolution. It is a mistake to hold that by virtue of this fact India enters the epoch of proletarian revolution skipping over the long and necessary process of social transformation in course of which the conditions for the proletarian revolution are created, the forces for it grow.

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The modern proletariat is a child of the bourgeois revolution. This standard-bearer of a deeper social transformation derives the necessary qualitative and quantitative strength from the achievements of the bourgeois revolution.

A wrong estimate of the character of the Indian revolution logically leads to absurd notions about the perspective of its development. The absurdity was evidenced by the tactics recommended by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, and practised in India by its uncritical adherents.

In order to qualify for the place of honour abdicated by the big bourgeoisie, the proletariat must do what they have failed to do, that is to mobilise the revolutionary energy of the democratic masses and to organise a determined relentless struggle for the accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution. Ordinarily, two factors are involved in the bourgeois revolution : the bourgeoisie and the democracy. The latter is the backbone of the revolution. With the self-elimination of the bourgeoisie, the revolution ceases to be bourgeois. But it remains

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democratic. The perspective of such a situation is that the fruits of the revolution may not be monopolised by the bourgeoisie. But that again will depend upon the flexibility of the new leadership, the social foundation of which must be a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes. If the bourgeoisie could be prevented from stepping in at the last moment to put on the crown of victory won by the masses, democratic freedom will not be a formality, a legal fiction, but a reality. The vanguard of the rising Indian proletariat will be able to direct the development of the impending revolution in that channel only if they succeed in winning over the confidence of the entire democratic mass. The tactics recommended by the Sixth World Congress were bound to defeat that end. Therefore, I opposed them.

Active participation in the revolutionary struggle on terms of equality is the road to mutual confidence. Proletarian dictatorship is not the slogan to secure the support of the entire democratic mass. By failing to secure the support and win the confidence of the democratic masses, the ideological vanguard of the proletariat cannot possibly guide the

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course of the revolution. The masses are simply handed over to the orthodox nationalists who discourage their revolutionary awakening, disorganise militant action, and may eventually use them for a Fascist movement. These were exactly the results produced by the practice of the tactics recommended by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

Instead of promoting a revolutionary left wing inside the Congress, as the spearhead of the democratic masses, the policy followed by the Communist Party of India ever since 1928 actually contributed to arrest the crystallisation of the radical nationalist forces against the reactionary leadership of the Congress. Consequently, the forces of democratic revolution remained under the influence of a reactionary ideology and were dissipated in non-revolutionary activities.

I advocated the policy of helping the rise of a revolutionary democratic leadership. That is the need of the moment. Nothing else could grow out of the objective possibilities of the situation. Only a specific type of leadership can be thrown up by the given

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relation of forces. In the given situation, the ideological vanguard of the proletariat can play a decisive rôle, guide the course of the revolution, only as an integral part of the revolutionary democratic leadership. The struggle must be conducted with a democratic program ; the demands must be democratic ; the slogans must express the aspirations of the entire democratic mass, composed of all the oppressed and exploited classes. The democratic program is not Socialism : the demand of the democratic masses is not wholesale confiscation of private property. Their slogan can neither be the establishment of proletarian dictatorship, nor of Soviet Republic.

A dangerous mistake on the part of the Communist Party of India was the inability to differentiate between the leadership and the rank and file of the Congress. It failed to appreciate the objectively revolutionary significance of the Congress. The abusive language used in an unbalanced and unwarranted criticism, levelled not only against its reactionary leadership, but against the Congress as such, naturally prejudiced the nationalist rank and file against the Communists. I

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was decidedly opposed to the view that the National Congress is a counter-revolutionary organisation, that it consciously serves as a tool of the capitalists. I did not approve of the plan of rallying the democratic masses in the struggle against Imperialism outside the Congress. I categorically rejected the absurd theory that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class and that the anti-imperialist struggle could not succeed except under their leadership. I deplored the failure to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the lower middle class and the importance particularly of the intelligentsia. I condemned demonstrations hostile to the Congress, also the effort to persuade the workers and peasants to break away from the united anti-imperialist front as represented by the Congress.

I am of the opinion that, as a movement, the National Congress is of a great revolutionary significance. It commands the confidence of the oppressed and exploited masses, that is to say, of the forces of the democratic national revolution. It is a great mistake to look upon it as a political party of the bourgeoisie. The Congress is a coalition of

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classes. As such, it is bound to be dominated by one or the other of its constituent elements. Therefore, the danger of its coming completely under the influence of the bourgeoisie is always there. As a matter of fact, it has all along been more or less under their influence exercised directly or indirectly. The result has been that its objective revolutionary potentialities have not been developed. But the potentialities remain. The democratic masses constituting the backbone of the Congress must overthrow Imperialism and capture the political power necessary for a long overdue social transformation. The bourgeoisie cannot lead them in that revolutionary struggle. They must have a different leadership. The Congress can never be the party of the bourgeoisie. For, in that case, it must cease to be what it is. If the reactionary tendency represented by its present leadership prevails, the Congress is bound to disintegrate. The complete victory of the right wing has aggravated that danger, I pointed out many years ago. In the absence of an alternative leadership, the right wing has scored an easy victory. The mistaken tactics of the Communist Party has

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contributed largely to this alarming state of affairs.

The National Congress as the organ of the anti-imperialist struggle is the creation of the democratic masses. It must be wielded by the masses for the purpose with which it is created. It is the specific form of organisation which has grown out of the peculiar conditions of the country. The struggle for the overthrow of Imperialism and for the establishment of democratic freedom must be conducted by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes. The coalition will naturally be dominated by the most revolutionary class which will acquire that position by virtue of greater activity, firmer resolution, clearer foresight and greater devotion for the common cause. But the purpose of the tactics followed by the Communist Party of India was to break up the Congress, and to create a more revolutionary anti-imperialist mass organisation under the leadership of the proletariat. I opposed that tactics with the argument that disintegration of the Congress will be surely followed by demoralisation, and that would not be the atmosphere in which a new revolutionary mass organisation could

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be built. I suggested that the possible disaster must be headed off, that the ideological vanguard of the proletariat should help the crystallisation of the radical democratic forces so as to replace the present leadership of the Congress. I further argued that the National Congress, being the specific form of mass organisation grown out of the background of a given relation of classes, its possible disintegration would only impose upon the consciously revolutionary vanguard of the democratic masses the task of re-creating a similar organisation. Therefore, I condemned the tactics of the Communist Party of India as harmful and mischievous. I demanded that the ideological vanguard of the proletariat should place before the rank and file of the Congress the program of democratic national revolution, a program which should reflect the interests of all the oppressed and exploited classes. I insisted that no effort should be made to impose the maximum program of the proletariat—the program of Socialism—on the democratic masses involved in the anti-imperialist struggle. I recommended that we should make their program ours. The ideological vanguard of the proletariat

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should press for the realisation of the program of democratic revolution because the way to the proletarian revolution—to the establishment of Socialism—will be opened only upon the accomplishment of the democratic revolution.

I appealed to the Communist Party of India to rectify its mistakes. I advised them to be realists, to act as Marxists. Marxists must be guided by the objective realities of the situation. I pointed out that several experiences had proved that it was travelling on a wrong road ; that it had not acquired any influence in the mass movement developing under the Congress flag. I asked it to realise the implication of declaring the Congress to be a counter-revolutionary organisation. The declaration meant that, in its opinion, not only were the urban lower middle class counter-revolutionary, but the peasants also were counter-revolutionaries. There could not be any revolution in a country in which ninety-five per cent of the population were thus characterised. The proletariat constituting a minute fraction of the Indian people, and hardly formed as a class, could not alone save the country, The salvation of the toil-

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ing masses of India as well as the rest of the world will ultimately be found in Socialism. But the people of India must be led towards their salvation stage by stage. There could not be a proletarian revolution without the proletariat; and in our country, the modern proletariat, conscious of its historical mission, is still in its infancy. How many even of the most advanced workers intelligently want Socialism, or understand it? We should not idealise the proletariat. Our vision should not be coloured by our imagination. The revolutionary zeal of the ideological vanguard should not be ascribed to the workers, who strike simply for higher wages and other minor ameliorations. The numerical weakness of the Communist Party is the surest measure of the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat. Judged by that measure, one cannot estimate it very high.

Accomplishment of the task of the bourgeois revolution, is indispensably necessary for the creation of political, economic and cultural conditions conducive to the social emancipation of the proletariat. Other exploited classes, primarily the peasantry, are also vitally interested in the accomplishment

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of those initial revolutionary tasks. The proletariat must make alliance with them with the object of fighting for the common goal. As long as the revolutionary struggle must take place on the basis of a coalition of classes, most of which cannot be expected to accept the program of Socialism, such slogans as "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "Soviet Republic" are obviously unsuitable. They are sure to repel the forces of democratic revolution, thwart the formation of the necessary fighting alliance. Such slogans isolate the proletariat from the allies in the democratic revolution, and place before the proletariat a task which it can never achieve single-handed. Thus the vain desire to quicken the pace of revolution only obstructs its development. That is exactly what happened, in consequence of the tactics recommended by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

Ever since 1929, the Communist Party carried on the propaganda for political general strike as the decisive move in the struggle against Imperialism. That was a fantastic idea. Supposing that the entire industrial proletariat would participate in the strike,

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what would be the result? A minute fraction of the people will be hurled in a frontal attack upon a formidable enemy. Given the backwardness of the proletariat, there is little ground for that supposition. General strike is the signal for insurrection in highly industrialised countries. In industrially backward countries like ours it has little political value. To lead the Indian proletariat in a political general strike, would be to lead them to a disastrous and demoralising defeat. Therefore, I opposed the idea of a political general strike.

The proletariat will develop as a class, conscious of its historic mission, equipped for the purpose, in consequence of the modernisation of the economic life of the country, which will be brought about through the accomplishment of the long overdue tasks of the bourgeois revolution. It will acquire the political education, ideological foresight, revolutionary experience, in course of the struggle for national freedom and the accomplishment of those tasks. In course of that struggle, they will win over the confidence and capture the leadership of the oppressed and exploited masses. From that strategic

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position it will be able to defend the results of the democratic revolution against the usurpation by the bourgeoisie. It will be able to consolidate political power in a revolutionary democratic State based upon the oppressed and exploited masses. It will be able to use this revolutionary democratic State as the instrument of modernising the economic life of the country at a quick tempo. In short, the accomplishment of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie, by a coalition of the oppressed and exploited classes, under the hegemony of the ideological vanguard of the proletariat, will not entrench Capitalism. It will create conditions, political as well as industrial, for the eventual establishment of Socialism.

A false sense of loyalty to the Communist International persuaded the Communist Party of India to commit a whole series of disastrous blunders over a period of eight years. I criticised the mechanical view of discipline which compelled it to stick to a policy which could not possibly be approved of by intelligent judgment. The resolution of the Communist International which re-

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commended that sterile course was based upon inadequate informations, on a wrong estimate of the situation in India. The leaders of the International cannot guide the national sections on the right road unless these provide them with correct informations, and have the courage to declare a resolution erroneous when it does not correspond with the realities of the situation. If the Indian Communist Party had the courage to declare that experience had proved the policy to be wrong, the International would surely give serious consideration to the matter and rectify the mistake. But the Communist Party of India could not muster that courage. Centralisation of leadership does not imply dictation from above. Discipline does not preclude democracy. The principle of democratic centralisation, underlying the statutes of the Communist International, makes ample room for independent judgment on the part of its national sections.

To fight for democratic freedom is not unworthy of the ideological vanguard of the proletariat. Marx himself did that. To stand in the forefront of the struggle under the banner of the democratic national revolu-

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tion, is no betrayal of the proletarian usage. The vast majority of the forces involved in the revolution cannot be rallied under the banner of Communism. They are marching under the flag of Nationalism. The Communists must join them there, if they want to influence them, quicken their revolutionary consciousness, detach them from the present anti-revolutionary leadership, transform them into a formidable force sure to overwhelm Imperialism, and march triumphantly forward to revolutionise society more and more profoundly.

For holding these views and for criticising the mistakes of the leaders of the Communist International, I was condemned as a renegade to Communism, as an agent of the bourgeoisie, and even as a lackey of Imperialism.

After eight years' bitter experience, the disastrous policy was abandoned by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935. Immediately, I expressed my agreement with the resolution of the Seventh Congress. I wrote to the International as well as the Communist Party of

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India to that effect. Yet, the campaign against me continued. Practically all my views, condemned previously, have now been accepted. Why I am still treated as an "outcast" and castigated as a culprit, is more than I can say. However, as far as the Communist Party is concerned, the change appears to be only skin-deep. It has accepted the new line simply because it has been recommended by the Communist International. But having grown in the tradition of ultra-left sectarianism, it is very difficult for it to appreciate the far-reaching implications of the new policy. Besides, the new approach to the Congress, for example, is regarded merely as a *policy*. The idealisation of the proletariat still continues. The social character of the impending revolution is still not properly estimated. On the other hand, there is a new orientation regarding the bourgeoisie, which is considered to be a revolutionary factor. Consequently, there is a confusion of ultra-leftist tradition and neo-opportunism. This confusion does not permit the Communist Party to carry on any consistent policy. Now it talks of the Congress as the United anti-imperialist Front ;

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then again it demands the creation of United Front committees of action composed of the representatives of Congress Committees, Kisan Sabhas, Trade Unions and “other mass organisations”. It still dreams of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It proposes to build Socialism on the basis of peasant proprietorship. Disregarding the demand of the peasantry, it plans collectivisation of land. Painfully conscious of the qualitative and quantitative deficiency of the proletariat, it includes in that category the land workers and the poor peasantry. It preaches Socialism to the peasantry, and maintains that only Socialist propaganda can rally the toiling masses in the struggle against Imperialism. It has changed its attitude towards the Congress only to the extent of not using abusive language. But it still desires to disintegrate the Congress instead of transforming it into a revolutionary people's political party. Its real attitude towards the Congress is indicated by the insistence upon collective affiliation which, if introduced, would make of the Congress a loose Federation of diverse organisations with conflicting interests, which will surely break

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down in course of time, so that the party of the idealised proletariat may appear on the scene as the sole leader of the anti-imperialist struggle, which will immediately develop into the struggle for the establishment of Socialism, of course, through dictatorship of the proletariat, during the period of transition.

I am sure that the Communist Party of India would vehemently dispute these allegations. But at the same time, they would continue their crusade against me. This curious attitude should provide the clue to our differences to the unbiassed and discerning. If the Communist Party of India is sincere in its new policy, if it is capable of outgrowing infantile ultra-leftism, and can appreciate the implications of the resolution of the Seventh World Congress, there will be practically no difference. Its insistence on imaginary differences only betrays some ulterior motive which it is not my business to divulge or describe. I shall conclude by mentioning one reason and perhaps the most fundamental reason, which stands in the way to the generally desired unity. That reason is lack of independence.

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Let the Communist Party of India gather the courage to think for itself, let it not be bound by a false idea of discipline, let it be more concerned with facts than with fictions, and all our differences will disappear.

MY CRIME

*(An open letter to the Members of the
Communist International)*

For some time I have been standing before the "sacred Guillotine" the mad application of which is causing such a havoc to the International Communist movement. I have stood in that position for nearly a year, not shuddering with the fear for my head, but aghast at the incompetence of those who have usurped the leadership of the movement, and amazed at the temerity with which this incompetent and irresponsible leadership is driving the movement to rack and ruin. At last has come my turn, so inexplicably delayed. At the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the C. I. my humble head was demanded by the gentle Kuusinen in his characteristic manner of shirking responsibility. Referring to my latest "crime"—contribution to the press of the German Opposition—he wondered if after the commission of such a heinous crime

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one could still deserve to be a comrade of those whose views he represented. The stage was set for the purpose. The "masses" responded. The prompted cry—"a la guillotine" was raised from the obscure corner, and one connected with the Communist International nearly from its very foundation, active in the revolutionary movement for years previously, hitherto suspected of and criticised for alleged "left deviations," was placed automatically outside the pale of the C. I. After some unfounded attacks by Losowskys and Schubins, obviously with the authority of the Russian delegation, Manuilsky clinched the affair by damning me as a "renegade." It was a very simple procedure. No evidence whatsoever was produced to show how a traditional "leftist" has become a right opportunist, how one suddenly becomes a "renegade" after more than twenty years' active service to the revolution. Kuusinen simply asserted that I proposed the policy of making a block with the Indian Nationalist Bourgeoisie, and Manuilsky roundly called me a "renegade."

This itself may not be sufficiently important to arrest the attention of the entire International. But it is important,

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and deserves attention as a symptom of the state of affairs at the top of the movement. Therefore, I consider it necessary to place before the C. I. the facts of the case.

The attack upon me suddenly began at the Sixth World Congress in which I was not present, owing to illness. In his report on the Colonial Question Kuusinen attacked me as the father of the so-called theory of "de-colonisation." According to him, I had put forward the view that British Imperialism would gradually lead the Indian people to freedom. On that allegation I was characterised in the report as well as in the thesis (the tone was modified in the corrected stenogramme of the report and final version of the thesis) as "lackey of imperialism". The characterisation would be perfectly correct, had the allegation been proved. That, however, was not done, although Kuusinen went to the extent of asserting that in the columns of the "Vanguard" and the "Masses," which I edited, I had for years propagated this "Social democratic theory". The utter unsoundness of the assertion is proved by the files of those journals. I challenge anybody to find one

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single passage in them which bears out Kuusinen's allegation. Then, those journals were published under my editorship as the central organ of the Communist propaganda in India from May 1922 to the beginning of 1928. (I am not responsible for the first eight months of 1927 when I was away in China). During all that time, I was not once censored for right deviation. Indeed, criticism made occasionally by minor comrades was rather from the point of view groundlessly ascribed to me now, namely, overestimating the revolutionary rôle of the nationalist bourgeoisie. In short, for nearly five years the leadership of the International considered my point of view, on the whole correct ; otherwise I should have long ago been removed from the position I occupied. Now it is discovered that all the time I have been a Social Democratic lackey of imperialism. Logically, then, it must be admitted that until the Sixth Congress, the C. I. had had a wrong point of view as regards India. If the report and the thesis of the Sixth Congress contain the highest wisdom of Leninism, then, as far as the colonial, (particularly Indian) question is concerned, Lenin, Zinovieff, Bukharin, Stalin,

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all in their respective turns, have been anti-Leninist, Social Democratic lackeys of imperialism. And this is precisely the purport of the resolution on the Colonial as well as on other questions of the Sixth Congress. They represent a serious deviation from the tactical teachings of Lenin. Therefore, I expressed my disagreement with them. This is one of my crimes for which I am sentenced to the "Guillotine" of expulsion as a "renegade" to Communism.

To revert to the theory of "de-colonisation", the fatherhood of which is the ostensible cause of my victimisation. The unfortunate term has a little history. While I was away in China (1927) a new comrade from India came to Moscow. In his report he emphasised on the rapid development of modern industry in India. Such a development, which all along I had pointed out as a basic feature of the situation in post-war India, inevitably produces two tendencies, which must be carefully observed by us for the purpose of adjusting our tactics to the realities of the situation. These tendencies are the sharpening of the class antagonism inside the nationalist movement, on the one side, and

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compromise between the nationalist bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism on the other. Industrialisation of the country, even if it were done mainly with imperialist capital (which is not the case in India), is advantageous to the native bourgeoisie. These fight against imperialism because it obstructs the free development of their class. Consequently when imperialism, forced by its inner contradictions, permits, even encourages (as lately in the case of India) partial industrialisation of a colonial country, the basis of antagonism between the native bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism narrows down. The nationalist united front tends to break up, and a new united front of the native bourgeoisie with foreign imperialism is formed as against the working class. In such a situation, the native bourgeoisie outgrow the previous state of absolute colonial oppression. In summarizing the debate on the report of the Indian delegate, Bukharin suggested that the Commission set up for examining the question should report on the process of such "de-colonization". (He used the term for the first time, evidently in a tentative and relative sense).

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On my return I was charged to draft a resolution on the basis of the preparatory work accomplished by the Commission. The resolution drafted by me, which was never formally accepted (not because there was any serious objection to it, but because of the waning of interest in the subject), subsequently became the main weapon against me. It was in that document¹ that all my heresies were discovered, when subsequently it became necessary to find evidence in support of a verdict already secretly pronounced against me for some unknown crime. If the document contained the testimony of my crime, why was it not published? It was never done, because the very document proves how atrociously groundless are the allegations against me. Space does not permit extensive quotation, and I have not the means to publish such a lengthy document. Therefore I must be content with citing the most vital passages. After analysing the economic conditions of the country and giving facts marking the new tendencies of post-war colonial

1. This document is not in my possession, but must be found in the archives of Communist International. Vide the Preface to this book.

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exploitation, I came to - the following conclusion :

“Imperialism must proceed very cautiously in this new path which is as likely to lead it out of the post-war crisis, as to destruction. The implication of the new policy is gradual “de-colonisation” of India which will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of “dependency” to “Dominion Status”. The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of Imperialist finance. From a backward agricultural colonial possession, India will become a modern industrial country—member of “the British Commonwealth of free nations.” India is in a process of “de-colonization” in so far as the policy, forced upon Imperialism by the post-war crisis of capitalism, abolishes the old, antiquated forms and methods of colonial exploitation in favour of new forms and new methods. The forces of production which were so far denied the possibilities of normal growth, are unfettered. The very basis of national economy changes. Old class relations are replaced by new class relations. The basic

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industry, agriculture, stands on the verge of a revolution . . . ; the native bourgeoisie acquire an ever increasing share in the control of the economic life of the country. These changes in the economic sphere have their political reflex. The unavoidable process of gradual “de-colonisation” has in it the germs of the disruption of the empire.

“The Indian bourgeoisie outgrow the state of absolute colonial suppression. . . . In order to stabilise its economic basis, strengthen its position in India, British imperialism is obliged to adopt a policy which cannot be put into practice without making certain concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. These concessions are not conquered by the nationalist bourgeoisie. They are gifts (reluctant, but obligatory) of imperialism. Therefore, the process of “de-colonisation” is parallel to the process of the “de-revolutionization of the nationalist bourgeoisie.”

It is obvious from the above quotation (of course only for the unprejudiced readers) that the term “de-colonization” is used tentatively by way of indicating a tendency, and relatively, only in connection with the bourgeoisie who constitute a very small fraction of the

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entire population. Nowhere is it stated that the tendency affects the entire people. Much less is it even implied that there is the least possibility of the Indian people being free with the sanction of imperialism. On the contrary, it is clearly asserted that the process of certain improvement in the condition of the bourgeoisie is the result of a plan to intensify the exploitation of the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, this is the cross on which I was crucified before the Sixth Congress of the C. I.

Now about the perverse love that according to Kuusinen I have suddenly developed for the Nationalist bourgeoisie. Here again my entire past record ever since the Second Congress of the C. I. (1920) gives lie to the assertion made by Kuusinen. In the Second Congress I disagreed with Lenin about the rôle of the bourgeoisie in the colonial revolutionary movement. My views on the question are recorded in the thesis adopted by the Second Congress as supplementary to those drafted by Lenin. I can simply ask everybody who wants to judge me on the basis of my own views and actions, to read my writings. In the draft-resolution referred to above I wrote in September, 1927 :

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“All these factors taken together determine the character of the Indian Nationalist bourgeoisie. They are no longer a revolutionary force. Not only from the point of view of the internal conditions of India, but also from the point of view of present world conditions, the Indian bourgeoisie are rallied on the side of counter-revolution. They cannot and do not lead or participate in the struggle for national freedom (completely outside the British empire) . . . Indian revolution must still realise the program of bourgeois democracy, but it is no longer a bourgeois revolution ; because it can and will succeed only by breaking the bound of capitalist society.”

Still the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive puts me outside the pale of the C.I. on the ground that I advocated the opportunist policy of a block with the nationalist bourgeoisie. The present leadership of the International obviously has a very low opinion about the intelligence of the rank and file. In the Tenth Plenum a new charge could be brought against me—writing in the press of the Bandlerist renegades (Opposition to the Communist Party of Germany). This

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made the thing easier for the ruling clique. It was no longer necessary to examine what was written ; the fact that it was written in the Opposition Press was enough to damn the writer, irrespective of what he actually wrote.

Kuusinen made a feeble effort to answer my criticism of the resolution of the Sixth Congress, and of the catastrophic, ultra-left, sectarian, Trotskyist line followed on the strength of that resolution. What he did, however, was not to reply to my criticism. That he could not do, for my criticism consisted mostly of pointing out facts proving that the Sixth Congress resolution was based upon a false interpretation of the situation. He simply distorted what I said. He did not quote me. He simply told the Plenum what he read in my writing. In an article to the organ of the German Opposition I had pointed out that just when the Swaraj Party was putting up a parliamentary resistance to imperialist autocracy in connection with the Public Safety Bill, a manifesto of the C.I. ended with the slogan : "Down with Imperialism : Down with the Swaraj Party." To point out the tactical blunder of issuing the

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slogan at the moment, did not mean that I considered the Swaraj Party as friendly to Communism. On the contrary, for years, I had combated the illusion entertained by the C.I. leadership regarding the revolutionary rôle of the Swaraj Party. Here, again, I can only refer to the records for evidence. Unable to justify the grievous mistake of issuing such a stupid slogan against the Swaraj Party at that very unfortunate moment, Kuusinen resorts to the cheap demagogic of ascribing to me opportunist illusion about the Swaraj Party. For example, he goes to the extent of asserting that I have now "re-baptized the Swarajists as Independents". If he were honest in his manner of conducting a political discussion, he would not make such absurd assertion ; for, nowhere is there the least ground for it. The nationalist bourgeoisie cannot be effectively exposed in their compromising rôle by simply shouting stupid, provocative slogans. For this purpose, the Communists must follow the policy of class differentiation. The petty bourgeois masses must be supported in their revolt against the reformist leadership of the big bourgeoisie, notwithstanding that this revolt is

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often weak and vacillating. And precisely on this crucial point the present line of the C. I. goes far over the head of the situation. The policy of isolating ourselves on the Olympian heights of sectarianism drives the petty bourgeois masses in the direction of Fascism. The Indian experts of the C.I. apparatus would do well to observe this dangerous tendency of the situation. A Leninist policy of United Front would have transformed the petty bourgeois League of Independence into a powerful weapon to develop the revolution. This is a valuable lesson of the experience in China. Kuusinen's incoherent philippies against me do not in the least change the tragic fact that the present leadership of the C.I. advised the young, inexperienced Communists in India to withdraw into their very small shell, precisely when the petty bourgeois masses were coming towards the working class, to be led in the national revolutionary struggle. Kuusinen could not possibly dispute the fact that the petty bourgeois masses "remain revolutionary", but he would not have anything to do with their organisations nor would he permit the proletariat to establish any organisational connection with them. My criticism of this

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sectarianism is interpreted as a demand for an opportunist block with the *entire bourgeoisie*.

The Sixth Congress attributed to me a Social Democratic theory without presenting before the International the document in which the heresy is supposed to be contained. Not being present at the Congress, I could not defend my position, and explain my point of view as it really is. Soon after the report and resolutions of the Congress were published, I submitted to the Executive Committee of the C.I. a comprehensive statement of my views.² The statement also contained the criticism of Kuusinen's report and disagreement with the tactical line laid down by the Sixth Congress on the basis of that report. Why did not the International Executive publish that document? If it contained the evidence of opportunist deviation on my part, its publication would have been sufficient to condemn me. It is another long document. Is it not logical to believe that the present leadership of the C.I. suppressed the document, because they are not able to dispute the facts and arguments stated therein proving the incorrectness of the report and thesis of the Sixth Congress?

2. See the following chapter.

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The two main deviations attributed to me contradict each other. I could not possibly maintain them both unless I were a lunatic. To point out that the Indian bourgeoisie are outgrowing the condition of absolute colonial suppression, is not a Social Democratic deviation. On my part, I simply point out a tendency which characterises the situation. The term "de-colonization" is a secondary issue. A Marxist must deal in facts, not in terms and catch-phrases. The point at issue at the Sixth Congress is whether the forms and methods of colonial exploitation in the post-war period of capitalist decline must necessarily be the same (are the same) as in the pre-war days of capitalist prosperity and expansion. I maintain they are not. This I proved exhaustively in the statement on the discussion of the Indian question in the Sixth Congress. If I maintain this point of view, I cannot possibly advocate a policy of block with the nationalist bourgeoisie, unless I proposed a counter-revolutionary block, and I have not yet been accused of having done so. What I proposed and still propose, is that in the given conditions, Indian Communists must take the initiative in organising the broadest

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possible United Front of all the oppressed and exploited social elements under the hegemony of the proletariat, with a revolutionary democratic programme, to conduct the fight simultaneously on two fronts—against foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. The resolution of the Sixth Congress, in principle, does not reject such united front ; but practically does so by prohibiting the Communists to enter into any multi-class party. The resolution is full of glaring contradictions. On the one hand, it is maintained that imperialist exploitation of *the entire nation* is intensified ; on the other hand, it is stated that the nationalist bourgeoisie are counter-revolutionary. Why have these deserted the struggle against imperialism ? Obviously the latter is somehow accommodating them within the framework of colonial exploitation of the country as a whole. If they are still as oppressed as ever, and there is no prospect of their position being improved, they must remain a revolutionary factor. So, behind the radical phrases of the present leadership there still lurks the shadow of past opportunism. Ultra-leftism is likely to degenerate into opportunism any day when put to severe revolutionary test. If the

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Quixotic Soviet Republic of India is not realised through the magic method of mouth-ing catch-phrases, the pendulum may swing again to the other extreme, and the policy of opportunist alliance with the counter-revolutionary nationalist bourgeoisie," be revived.'

The crimes attributed to me I have not committed. My offence is that I lay claim to the right of independent thinking, and this is not permissible in the present critical period through which the C.I. is passing. I was not declared a "renegade" and placed outside the pale of the official International, so long as I did not speak out my disagreement. The gag of silence was imposed upon me, the all-mighty apparatus depriving me of all the means of expression. In other words, for the unpardonable crime of independent think-ing, I would have been quietly buried into

3. Up to 1924, I had to combat the idea that the nationalist bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class, and therefore the Communists must make an alliance with them. After four years of fruitfully correct policy, the pendulum swung towards extreme leftism. When that happened, I was afraid that before long the swing may be again to the other direction. What was feared is actually happening to-day. We are again hearing about the "revolutionary rôle of the nationalist bourgeoisie." I do not know if the leaders of the C.I. have actually reverted to this view. Some of their Indian followers, however, are preaching it to-day.

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oblivion, had I not dared raise my voice. But the duty of a revolutionary sometimes transgresses the narrow limits of arbitrary discipline, . . . I was placed in a position where I found it was my revolutionary duty to join the Opposition against the present leadership which is ruining the International.

I disagree with all the resolutions of the Sixth Congress, not only with that on the Indian Question. If the mistake were on one particular question, it might be advisable to wait hoping that it would be corrected in course of time. But the mistaken line pursued in India is but a small part of a huge blunder. Therefore, it is not permissible to keep quiet. The International is in a crisis which is manifested by the composition and exercise of its leadership.

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IN THE VI WORLD CONGRESS OF THE C.I.*

The polemic against the so-called theory of "de-colonisation" cast a shadow of unreality over the otherwise high class discussion of the Indian question in the VI World Congress of the Communist International. Therefore, it is necessary to begin with a few remarks about this theory ; more correctly, about the scarecrow of this so-called theory.

I do not propose to answer the polemics of Comrade Kuusinen and others. It will not be possible to correct the inaccuracies of facts cited in Comrade Kuusinen's report within the limits of this short statement. If necessary, I will be prepared to do so in a future occasion. For the present it is sufficient to observe that Comrade Kuusinen was not well-advised as regards facts. It is not the picture of India of 1928, but of a quarter of a century ago, that he drew before the Congress. This he was bound to do because of his admitted "lack of

*Written in 1929—M. N. R.

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the necessary knowledge of the entire subject". But he was certainly extravagant in imagination, if he sought to accuse me of having ever maintained, openly or by implication, that imperialism under any circumstance could be a progressive factor in the colonies. Happily, in the corrected version of his concluding speech he emphatically stated that he did not identify "this false theory (of de-colonization) of our comrades" with the "apology of colonial regime made by the lackeys of imperialism". This eleventh hour statement, however, does not alter the fact that in his report he asserted that the comrades who maintained that there was a change in the economic policy of the British Imperialism in India, "even visualise de-colonization of India by British Imperialism". This is a misreading and misinterpretation of what I wrote even in this connection. The very passage quoted by Comrade Kuusinen to condemn me as an apologist of imperialism, proves that I do not hold the opinion that "British Imperialism will lead the Indian people by hand to freedom". What I pointed out was that, owing to the decay of capitalism in the metropolis, imperialism is obliged to find means and methods

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of exploiting India more intensively, and is thereby creating a situation which weakens its very foundations.

Comrade Kuusinen asks : If it is so, why is British Imperialism doing such a thing? This is a very simple way of looking at the situation. It is trying to understand the operation of capitalism (in its highest stage of imperialism) separated from its inner contradictions. In the light of such simple logic Marx also becomes ridiculous by virtue of having said that capitalism creates its own grave-digger. If the capitalist mode of production lays down the conditions for Socialism, why did the bourgeoisie introduce it into society? These apparent contradictions are explained by Marxian dialectics.

To have a correct appreciation of the situation, it is necessary to distinguish between the subjective and the objective forces operating upon it. British Imperialism does not wish to lose an iota of its power in India. This is the subjective factor which has very great significance. But it alone is not decisive. The objective factor, that is, what, in the given situation, is possible for the British bourgeoisie to do to maintain their domination in

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India and the effect of what they do, reacts upon the subjective force.

If the subjective were the decisive factor, there would never be a revolution, for the ruling class would never want to abdicate its power. There is, of course, the opposing subjective which wants to overthrow the existing order. But its wish alone is not sufficient. It can be realised when other objective forces are in operation in the situation. The degeneration of the ruling class, the decay of the established system of production and the decomposition of its state-power are the objective conditions for a successful revolution. The establishment, by a close analysis of facts, that these objective conditions are maturing in India, in spite of the desire of British Imperialism, does not prove, as Comrade Kuusinen said, that "our conception of nature of the imperialist colonial politics should be revised". On the contrary, Marxist and Leninist conception of the nature of imperialism does not exclude the maturing of conditions indicating degeneration, disorganisation and decay of imperialism as preliminary to its final overthrow. Otherwise it would not be a revolutionary conception of the dynamics

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of the situation, but a static view without any perspective.

As is evident from the very passages quoted by Comrade Kuusinen, I used the term “de-colonization” (*within inverted commas, because it is not my creation*) in the sense that imperialist power is undermined in India creating conditions for its successful revolutionary overthrow. India is a colony of the classical type. She will never cease to be a colony until British power is overthrown by revolutionary means. No compromise (however far-reaching) between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialists will give real freedom to the Indian people. These are all truisms. But it is also true that India of to-day is not the India of a quarter of a century ago. It is simply ignoring facts to maintain that the Indian bourgeoisie to-day is economically as suppressed and politically as oppressed as twenty years ago. To recognise the fact that, simultaneously, in spite of, and with the sanction of Imperialism, India is now travelling on a path of economic development closed to her previously, is not a violation of the Marxist-Leninist conception of the nature of imperialism. On the contrary, such develop-

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ments are not foreign to this nature. Indeed, Lenin did presage such developments in the colonies towards the latest stages of imperialist domination. In showing the evergrowing parasitic character of imperialism he approvingly quoted the following from Schulze-Gavernitz : “Europe will shift the burden of physical toil—first agricultural and mining, then of heavy industry—on the black races and will remain itself at leisure in the occupation of bond-holder, thus paving the way for the economic and later, the political emancipation of the coloured races.” (*Imperialism*).

What, after all, is Imperialism? It is the domination and the exploitation of the backward races by the bourgeoisie of other capitalist countries. It is so, as far the colonies are concerned. Imperialism, as a whole, has much wider scope. That, however, does not directly concern us here. For the purpose of dominating and exploiting the colonial people the self-same methods are not, cannot be, applicable always. The object of the imperialist rulers is to get the greatest possible profit out of the colonies. How this profit is derived, is immaterial. The way British finance-capital gets profit

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out of its Canadian and Australian possessions is different from the way it does the same from the East and West African colonies. The methods of exploitation applied in these are again not the same as in India. The change takes place not only from place to place but from time to time as well. The methods of deriving profits from Canada or Australia today are not the same as they were previously. There is no reason why the same change should not take place in India, if the interests of imperialism demand it, or the exigencies of imperialism force it.

Instead of considering imperialism as something unchangeable, static, a Marxist should examine it dialectically. By doing that we shall find its weakness more clearly, and thus be able to fight it more effectively. In this examination one should not squibble over the exact number of proletariat and blast furnaces in India. What is to be established is the general tendency. Is India politically and economically exactly in the same position as twenty-five years ago? Can the means and methods of exploitation applied at the period meet the present requirement of British Imperialism? Has there been any inner change

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in the position of British Imperialism which forces it to adopt new means and methods of deriving profits from India? Is post-war imperialism in the position to continue colonial exploitation in the pre-war forms? These are the vital questions to be answered ; and the correct answer could be found only in an unprejudiced examination of facts of the situation, as it is.

Obviously the crux of the question is the internal condition of British capitalism. This was hardly touched in the discussion of the Indian question in the Congress.

Colonial polities suitable to the interests of British capitalism before the War, cannot meet the situation in which British capitalism find itself to-day in consequence of the war. Modern empires are built on capital exported from the metropolis. Britain's ability to export capital depends primarily on the condition of the industries at home. Therefore, an analysis of the economic situation in Britain should be the starting point of a serious discussion of the Indian question.

Capital is exported from a country when it is "over-developed", that is, when all the accumulated surplus cannot be invested there

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at a sufficient profit. Investment in countries where capital is scarce, price of land relatively small, wages are low and raw materials are cheap, brings higher profits. (*Lenin, Imperialism*). How is the position of Britain to-day as regards export of capital? Is she in the position to export sufficiently large amounts of capital? If the facts give an affirmative answer to this question, then we may not look to a far-reaching change in the imperialist policy. For, in that case, imperialism will be still in its "normal" condition. But a different picture in Britain will necessarily mean a readjustment in imperial relations.

It is an established fact that Britain to-day suffers from under-production. Her actual production is much lower than her productive capacity. In other words, Britain produces much less than she could produce. This forced limitation of production has been caused by the shrinkage of market as a result of the war and growth of industries in other countries. Since the conclusion of the war, the total volume of British exports has never exceeded 80 p.c. of the pre-war level. In contrast to this the British export trade

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expanded uninterruptedly, during the period of 1880 to 1913. And it was in that period of prosperity that the empire was built up and consolidated. Expanding export of manufactured goods (and by far the largest portion of Britain's export has always been manufactured goods) was the main channel for the export of capital which in its turn founded and cemented the empire. Therefore, a decline of the export trade is bound to affect the solidity of the empire, unless some other means are found to counteract the weakness resulting therefrom. In other words, the colonial policy evolved in the period of prosperity no longer suits imperialist interests when the conditions on which the policy was based, have changed. The colonies acquired and kept as reserve during the period of prosperity, should now be so exploited as to make up for the decline in the home country.

What will be the result of the policy, whether it will not defeat the very object with which it is launched, is a different question. The point at issue here is that changed conditions in the metropolis render the continuation of the old methods of colonial exploitation disadvantageous, and force upon the

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imperialist bourgeoisie a new policy irrespective of what they would rather prefer.

On the question of the ultimate consequence of this policy, my contention is and has been that it will create conditions which will facilitate the disruption of the empire. To deduce from this Marxist contention that I am of the opinion that the British bourgeoisie will willingly "de-colonise" India, is simply absurd—wilful misrepresentation. What I said, and what can be maintained without slightly violating the Marxist-Leninist views of imperialism, is that what undermines imperialist monopoly and absolutism, inevitably operates as a "de-colonising" force as far as India is concerned.

Now, if the fall in Britain's export trade were a temporary phenomenon, then, it could not produce far-reaching consequences. So it is necessary to examine more closely the nature and extent of the present crisis of British capitalism. Authoritative capitalist economists themselves have admitted that it is not a passing phenomenon. It is admitted that the present crisis cannot be overcome in the 'normal' course of events. For example,

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the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee in its report, published a few months ago, remarks : "Our exports have been obstinately stagnant in the post-war period and show no clear signs of any big recovery in the near future. The ominous nature of the situation becomes more evident when it is known that this admittedly permanent decline affects particularly the key-industries, namely, coal, iron and steel, cotton and ship-building ; and these industries supply more than half of Britain's export trade." Discussing the depression in these key-industries the Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee observes : "We cannot be sure that our staple trades will revive to their old dimensions". The grave significance of this situation can be fully judged when it is kept in mind that "these staple industries were the chief contributors to our export trade ; and their expansion in the last century was the basis of our national development as a foreign trading and foreign investing nation." (*Ibid*).

Similar opinions testifying to the permanence of industrial depression in Britain are forthcoming from other equally competent

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sources. So, not being a passing phenomenon, it is bound to produce abiding consequences. The situation is particularly pregnant, for the process of decay has attacked the most vital spots, precisely those industries whose development contributed to Britain's growth as a foreign-investing (that is, imperialist) nation.

Let us examine the consequences of this basic fact, in some details. The condition for the export of capital from a given country, is its possession of more capital than can be invested at home at a sufficiently high rate of profit. The period in which this condition obtained in Britain, coincided with the period of gigantic expansion of export trade. Between 1880 and 1913 the total amount of British capital invested abroad, increased from 800 million pounds to 3,500 million pounds. Industrial prosperity at home led to enormous accumulation of capital all of which could not be profitably absorbed inside the country. It was so much so that since the eighties of the last century the amount of capital exported from Britain rose steadily every year till in 1908 it exceeded the amount invested at home. Ever since 1908 the ratio

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of capital exported to that invested at home increased year by year, until the war disturbed the situation. Of the total capital issues in London in the period between 1908 and 1913, about three quarters were for overseas investment. In the year immediately before the war broke out, the amount of capital exported by Britain was approximately 150 million pounds, whereas 36 millions were invested at home.

The picture changes after the war. The volume of overseas investment (including colonial) showed a decrease absolutely, and what is very important for our analysis, relatively to home investment. According to the editor of *the Economist*, Layton, (in his evidence before the Colwyn Committee on National Debt and Taxation) the total amount of capital exported in the five years preceding the war, was 863 million pounds in contrast to 466 millions in the same period after the war. Post-war annual foreign issues amounted to 185 million pounds in contrast to the average 200 millions during the years immediately preceding the war. The proportion of the total issues meant for overseas investment was 88 per cent in 1912, 62 per cent in

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1924 and 31 per cent in 1927. The tendency is to fall further on.

One step further in the examination, and we reach the source of the disease. Obviously, Britain exports less capital because in the post-war years she no longer possesses so much surplus capital as before the war. In other words, since the war, in Britain, capital accumulates at a declining rate. It is not possible to find the exact extent of this decline. On the strength of several estimates made by competent authorities, the Colwyn Committee came to the conclusion that the total of the national savings of Britain in 1924 was approximately 475 million pounds as against 375 in 1913. Considering the fall in the value of money the figure should have been 650 to maintain the pre-war level. As it is, it shows a drop of over 30 p.c. in the rate of accumulation. "The real savings exhibit a decline which may amount in present money values to something like 150 to 200 million pounds a year." (*Report of the Colwyn Committee*). Now, the needs of the home industry (refitting of the old, and starting of new to make up for the incurable slump in the old) absorb such a large proportion of

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the depleted accumulation that the surplus for export gets smaller. Thus, the very roots of the British imperialist structure are in a state of decay. This must affect the entire structure, and the imperialist bourgeoisie must make a desperate effort to find new means to support the undermined edifice. In their frantic effort to stabilise a tottering structure they will hasten its collapse. Nevertheless, they must make the effort, otherwise they would not be what they are—they would not be bourgeoisie.

The decline of the rate of accumulation together with the increased demand for home consumption leaves very little capital for export. The following table illustrates the situation as compared with what it was before the war.

	1913	1924 (in millions of pounds)	1927
Total issues	245.5	475	450.8
Home investment	49.7	350	314.6
Exported	195.5	125	185.2

Presently it will be shown that the figures of foreign issues in these years do not represent the actual amount of capital exported, which is very much less.

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With this knowledge of inner conditions of British capitalism one can explain why the flow of British capital to India subsided since 1923. The fact that the British capital exported to India was reduced year after year until it reached an insignificant level, does not prove the hostility of the British bourgeoisie to any change of economic policy in India. The slackening in the tempo of industrial development is due to the fact that British imperialism is not in a position to provide the capital required for it. Its scheme is to mobilise the capital resources of India for the purpose. This is a very dangerous adventure ; the imperialist bourgeoisie must go slowly. There is, however, no change in the policy. There cannot be any change ; for the policy is not the choice of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Inner contradictions of capitalism accentuated by changed conditions, have forced it upon them. Lenin wrote : "Capitalism, in its imperialist phase, arrives at the threshold of complete socialisation of production. To some extent it causes the capitalists, whether they like it or not, to enter a new social order, which marks the transition from free competition to the socialisation of

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production.” (*Imperialism*). As the capitalist mode of production, in course of its development, creates the basis of socialist society, so it is also possible that imperialism in its last stages, is forced to adopt such methods and forms of colonial exploitation, as strike a death-blow to the very colonial regime.

In consequence of the fact that in the post-war years capital has been accumulating in the possession of the British bourgeoisie at a declining rate, they are obliged to export capital in decreasing amounts. The check of the flow of capital to India in last years is a reflection of this general decrease in the export of capital from Britain. *The Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee reports*: “that the margin which remains available for making fresh investments abroad, is materially lower than it used to be. In the last four years our surplus for foreign investments has been fully 100 millions per annum less, not only than it was before the war but also than it was so lately as 1922-23”. As the British bourgeoisie were obliged to devote the reduced exportable surplus, in the first place, to retain their most vulnerable sections of the imperial front, very little was left for India.

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This fact, while immediately a check to the tempo of industrial development in India, renders the necessity of industrialising India more imperative. For, the whole Imperial structure will crumble, unless the British bourgeoisie can find new sources of profit to set off the present decline in the rate of accumulation of capital at home. India provides such a source if subjected to new forms of exploitation. The gap created by the industrial decay at home absorbs an ever-increasing portion of income from abroad. These, in their turn, have also decreased. "Our income from overseas investments was seriously impaired by the inroads which were made in these investments during the war in order to pay for munitions and necessary supplies from overseas." (*Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee Report*). The report also testifies to a considerable fall in the real value of the income from shipping—another main source of income from abroad. Then, the operation of inter-allied war-debt payment leaves a debit account against Britain.

Fall of export has swollen the adverse balance of British foreign trade to very large dimensions. On the other hand, the income

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from external sources, with which the adverse balance of trade is met, has also decreased in real value. The position as compared to the pre-war year is as follows :

	1913	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
	(in millions of pounds)						
Adverse Trade balance	158	171	195	410	384	475	892
Net income from ex- ternal sources	389	860	373	324	488	468	488
Net surplus avail- able for reinvest- ment abroad	181	189	178	86	54	7	96

This table shows that while the adverse trade balance has increased by nearly 150 per cent since 1913, the increase in the net income from abroad has been only 37 %. The consequence of this disparity is a very serious inroad upon Britain's position as a foreign-investing, that is, imperialist country. For, this alarmingly declining "surplus is the true measure of the net increase of our ownership of capital abroad." (*Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee Report*). The slight recovery in the last year does not represent the reality of the situation. The adverse trade balance is slightly decreased not as result of an increased export, but of reduced import. Then the

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small increase of export in 1927 does not even make up for the heavy drop in the previous year. Indeed the two years' average touches the lowest level of export. Further British imports being chiefly raw materials, their reduction will mean a further fall of export in the next year.

From the above facts it is evident that Britain's ability to export capital has become very limited. Nevertheless, new foreign issues in London since 1925 show a tendency to increase. This is a new problem : Where does the capital come from? The following table illustrates the anomalous situation.

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
	(in millions of pounds)					
Net surplus from abroad	189	178	86	54	-12	74
Actual foreign issues	185	186	184	88	112	189

This table shows that until 1923 the foreign issues were within the limits of the exportable surplus. Since then the limits have been exceeded. This could have been done either by depriving the home industries of necessary capital or by transference to other centres of world finance (mainly New

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York) of foreign bonds held in London. If the former was the case, then it would prove that the parasitic nature of imperialism has developed to the extent of eating into its own vitals. But it could not be entirely so, for such large amount of capital could not be sent abroad except through an increase of the export trade, which has not been the case in the last years. So the new foreign issues, at least the major portion of them, in the last years, must have represented transference of foreign securities, and, therefore, were the measures not of an increase but decrease of Britain's ownership of capital abroad. The ominous nature of the increasing foreign issues becomes still more evident when it is known that according to the calculation of Kindersley, President of the National Savings Committee, made on the basis of informations received from 60 British banks and 160 British companies, *only 86 million pounds were available in 1927 for the purpose of investment both at home and abroad.* On the strength of all these facts it can be concluded that since 1924 British capital invested abroad has decreased by well over 800 millions.

Now, let us see, how the alarmingly

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grave crisis of British Imperialism affects its relation with India. Only from that perspective could we get a correct view of the situation. Any examination of the relation between India and British Imperialism except in the light of the position of the latter as a whole, is bound to be superficial. British policy in India is essentially determined by the internal conditions of British Imperialism as a whole. It is not based on any other principle than to extract the greatest possible amount of booty. At present British Imperialism must squeeze more out of India than ever. The profit cannot be appreciably augmented by the old methods of colonial exploitation. On the contrary, the old policy of keeping India forcibly in economic backwardness has been lately reducing the value produced by the Indian masses for the benefit of British Imperialism.

At present India has to export as much as before the war to buy much less. This is due to the disparity between the prices of agricultural products, which comprise the bulk of her exports, and of manufactured goods which she imports. For example, now India imports cotton goods ten per cent less, in

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volume, than before the war. Agricultural production per capita also shows a decline.

And, to maintain her position as a first class imperial power, Britain has lately been obliged to write off a considerable portion of the diminishing profits from India. The amount of tributes from India can be raised essentially on one condition, the production of greater values by the toiling masses. This can be done only by the application of advanced means of production. In other words, with primitive agriculture as her main industry, India cannot produce for British Imperialism the increased revenue that is required by the latter to repair the decay of its foundation. Therefore, modernisation of the means and methods of production in India has become the policy of Imperialism.

The result of this policy is clearly visible to a Marxist. It will not only defeat its own object ; it will hasten the collapse of imperialism. Precisely therefore, the consequence of this policy can be characterised as having a “de-colonising” significance. It is simply absurd to say that recognition of the far-reaching effect of the new economic policy forced upon British Imperialism by its inner

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crisis, is analogous to the belief that imperialism is becoming a progressive force. Such arguments may be useful for demagogic polemics ; but it certainly betrays the ignorance of Marxian dialectics.

Neither from the point of view of Marxian theories (their application to the realities of a given situation—not their quotation as dead formulas) nor on the basis of the facts, can it be proved that political and economic conditions in post-war India are the same as before the war. Nor can it be disproved that these changes have occurred and are occurring with the sanction of, and under the guidance of, Imperialism. The march of India from the state of “dependency” towards that of a “dominion” is a fact. How long the march will last is a different question. The decisive feature of the situation is that under the present conditions, it is advantageous for imperialism to transform India from an economically backward to an industrially developed, higher type of colony, producing greater revenue. Failure to see these essential characteristics of the situation will prevent us from determining correctly our tactics in the struggle against imperialism.

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The tribute from India constitutes a considerable portion of the British income from abroad. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the amount of revenue derived by British Imperialism from India. On the basis of plausible estimates made by various competent authorities, the rate at present could be calculated at 150 million pounds a year, approximately.

A close scrutiny of Britain's international balance of payment reveals the fact that the entire income from external sources is not usually accounted for therein. A reserve is kept, which is not shown in the public accounts. It can be assumed that a large portion of the income from India is put on the reserve account. For example, in the last several years, only 15 million pounds were put under the heads "Receipts from Services," (*Estimate of the Journal of the Board of Trade*) while at least 20 millions were derived from India alone on the same accounts. Further, the declining line of Britain's international credit touched the bottom in 1925, the international balance-sheet showing debit of 12 millions in 1926. Nevertheless, next year there was shown a credit of 74 millions

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which increased even to 96 millions in a revised account of the Board of Trade published in the middle of 1928. But the improvement in the balance of actual trade did not correspond with the rise of credit; and the income from the external sources was shown to be the same as in the previous year. Whence did the increased credit come? The reserve, in which considerable portion of the revenue from India is put, must have been drawn upon to restore the equilibrium of the international balance-sheet as published. All these prove that a lot of book-keeping jugglery throws a veil over the actual state of Britain's foreign income.

Whatever may be the case, one thing is certain: an ever-increasing portion of the revenue from India has of late been absorbed to check the catastrophic fall in Britain's international credit. In this situation it becomes a pressing necessity to increase the revenue from India. Irremediable slump of the export trade and the resulting decline of British capital invested abroad, seriously reduce the possibility of augmenting, even of maintaining the level of, the income from countries in which the operation of the forces of produc-

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tion is not completely dictated by British Imperialism. The reserves of the empire must be drawn upon. Hence the scheme of "Empire Development," and India is given the most important place in that scheme. For, on the one hand, the application of the scheme to the self-governing parts of the empire (Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc.) does not entirely depend upon the desire of the British bourgeoisie and, on the other hand, in the more backward outskirts of the Empire (new African colonies) the application of this scheme will not immediately produce results of effective importance. Therefore, the largest and most precious jewel of the British Crown must live up to its reputation. India must be economically developed to serve Britain's imperialist interests. Her enormous potential riches (accumulated wealth and wasted labour power) should be harnessed. This cannot be done unless her productive capacities are freed from the antiquated means and methods of colonial exploitation.

India pays her tribute to imperialism in the shape of excess export. The surplus of her export over import, in the present conditions, represents what is taken away from her

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without giving anything in return. The balance of India's international trade was upset for the first time in 1920. In that year India's imports exceeded her exports to the extent of 790 million rupees.

The average of surplus export in the five years preceding, had been 780 millions. Similar situations continued in the following year, causing terrible alarm for the imperialists. India was on the verge of bankruptcy. She failed to pay her "debts" to her overlords. The antiquatedness of the pre-war forms of colonial exploitation stood revealed. It became clear that India must be allowed to raise her productive capacity, if she was to continue as a profitable domain of British Imperialism. It was precisely in the years 1920-21, when India's bankruptcy became evident, that decisions were taken by Imperialism to discard the antiquated forms in favour of advanced ones for exploiting India.

Far-seeing leaders of Imperialism had already during the war been pointing out the need for a new course. As early as 1915, Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, had impressed upon the British Government that after the war India must be helped to be-

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come an industrial country. The Indian Industrial Commission, set up in 1916, on the above initiative of the Viceroy, in its report published two years later, recommended that in the future the Government should play an active rôle in the industrial development of India ; that the raw products of India should be manufactured in the country into articles necessary in peace-time as well as in war ; that agriculture should be modernised ; that the government must abandon the old policy of "*laissez faire*" ; and that all the available capital resources of India should be tapped for the purpose. The Reforms Act of 1919, which introduced political conditions entirely unknown in pre-war India, also incorporated the new tendency. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report, which constituted the basis of the Act, contained the following :

“As the desirability of industrial expansion became clearer, the Government of India fully shared the desire of the Indian leaders to secure the economic advantages that would follow local manufactures of raw products. . . If the resources of the country are to be developed, the Government must take action. . . After the War the need for in-

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dustrial development will be all the greater. . . . On all grounds, a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for to give India economic stability.....Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilised. We cannot measure the access of strength which an industrial India will bring to the power of the Empire. . . . The Government must admit and shoulder its responsibility for furthering the industrial development of the country.”

In 1922 the Government set up the Fiscal Commission with an Indian industrial magnate as the chairman, and by accepting, in the beginning of the next year, its findings, that protective tariff should be introduced to help Indian industries, revised the traditional colonial policy formulated, in the words of Pitt—“not a nail should be manufactured there”—in the mercantilist days with reference to the American colonies. The transformation of the British economic policy in India is testified by the fact that “protectionism” has replaced free trade. When British trade with India is on the decline, its freedom, maintained at the expense of India, no longer

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suits imperialist interest. As previously free trade meant industrial backwardness for India, now its reversion to protectionism must have the opposite effect.

Again be it emphasised that what is important to establish is the dynamics of the situation. The dominating tendency must be noticed. The obstacles to the full realisation of the policy, caused by other factors, do not disprove that the policy is there. While up to the war, the policy of the British Indian government was to collect a customs duty *exclusively for revenue purposes* not exceeding 5 per cent *ad valorem*, since the war the average level of the tax on imports has risen from 7.5 per cent in 1918 to 11 per cent in 1921, 15% in 1922, 18% in 1924 and it is nearly 20% at present. The duty on iron and steel manufactures is still higher¹; besides, the industry receives a bounty from the State. The result of protection to the iron and steel industry, the growth of which is the basic condition for the industrial development of a country, is noticeable from the table overleaf.

1. The import duty has since been still increased, and other industries, for example, sugar, have received the benefit of protection.

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PRODUCTION IN INDIA

(In Thousands of Tons)

Year	Pig-iron	Steel
1918	207	32
1920	316	159
1924	891	340
1925	894	456
1926	927	457 ²

Although, owing to the operation of factors outside India, the tempo of industrialisation has been somewhat retarded since 1924-25, there has been a jump in the production of the iron and steel which lays down the conditions for an acceleration of the tempo in the near future. The potentiality of the situation is all the greater because this relatively considerable rise in the production of iron and steel takes place in India when their production in Britain declines or stagnates. That there is a consummate policy of industrialisation, applied with caution so that the relation between India and Britain is not suddenly thrown out of gear, can be proved with abundant evidence. For instance, speaking in the Indian Council of State on the Steel

2. The production has continued to increase during the following years.

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Protection Bill (Jan. 26, 1922) the Government spokesman, Charles Innes said :

“It is hoped to make the industry much stronger by attracting new capital and by including new firms to engage in it. Already India made the cheapest pig-iron, and we can look forward to the time when India will become an exporter of steel.”

In 1926, 150,000 tons of pig-iron were exported to Japan from India.³ The price was 37 shillings 6 pence per ton. At the same time the price in Britain was 79 shillings 6 pence. Obviously, industrialisation of India will help Britain to maintain her place in international trade.

The hope with which British imperialism adopted a new policy for the exploitation of India, was not misplaced, as far as its immediate consequences are concerned.

“India has now become an important factor in the international trade in pig-iron, and has thus not only gained for herself a practically complete independence of all other countries as regards pig-iron, but has also become a very large exporter. The first stage,

3. The export of pig-iron has increased. Lately, it has been exported to Britain itself.

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that is, the production of pig-iron in the use of enormous natural resources has thus been successfully passed.” (*British Board of Trade Journal*, Sept. 9, 1926.)

When it is known that India’s deposit of iron-ores has been estimated at 2,882 million tons, this “successful” first stage opens up before imperialism a very encouraging perspective. This enormous potential riches converted into commodities at such a low cost that it could be sold at a price less than half of the British level, will mean indeed a very great “access of strength” for the Empire. So industrialisation of India, in this period of capitalist decay in Britain, rationalisation of colonial exploitation, so to say, is not incompatible with the basic principles of imperialism.

The severe crisis of 1921-1922 was tided over. The balance of India’s foreign trade was superficially restored. It was done not so much by an increase of export as by a forced reduction of imports. Owing to India’s inability to meet her “obligations”, Britain was compelled to sell her less. This patch-work on the untenable relation between India

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and Britain, had an unfavourable effect on the conditions of British industries. The limitation of the Indian market put an end to the post-war boom in Britain. The great increase in India's Import trade—3,350 million rupees in 1922 as compared to 1,910 million in 1921—indicated a large export of British capital into India. To restore the balance of trade, India's imports were reduced to 2,410 million rupees in 1923. The consequence was shown in the drop of British capital exported to India. Since then the situation has essentially been the same in which the channel of British capital to flow into India is restricted in addition to the basic fact that Britain's exportable surplus of capital is also very limited. In 1926 the exports regained their pre-war level, but the imports still remained very far from recovery. Remarking of this state of things, the official report says :

“At present, about three-quarters of Indian export consist of agricultural produce, and the same proportion of her imports is made up of manufactured goods. With the existing disparity between the price of agricultural and industrial products, it is obvious that India has to make a greater productive

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effort than she formerly did, in order to secure the same volume of imports.”

The reason for a change of the economic policy of imperialism in India is stated in the above quotation. The productive power of India must be increased, otherwise her capacity to buy will go down. The trade relation between India and Britain which is the main channel through which the latter extracts tributes from the former, can no longer be maintained in a state favourable to imperialism, unless India can consume more commodities, and export enough to leave a considerable margin after the value of imports has been covered. The steady decline of British trade with India has been the cause of widespread alarm in the imperialist camp. Commenting on the subject, the organ of the most die-hard section of the British bourgeoisie, those who are opposed to any change in the relation between India and Britain, wrote :—“Trade is the life and purpose of the Indian Empire. If we lose that trade, we have neither the power nor the incentive to remain in India.” (*Morning Post, London, Jan. 19, 1926*). The paramount importance of trade is recognised not only by the mercantilists, but even by the

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financial and heavy industrial magnates whose views (in addition to those of the landed aristocracy) the *Morning Post* represents. From another section of the bourgeoisie, views are also expressed appreciating the supreme importance of Indian trade for the empire and suggesting that revolutionary measures should be adopted to enlarge that trade. Discussing the prospects of "imperial development" the *Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee* writes :—

"It must be enormously to our advantage to encourage the growth of Indian prosperity and Indian trade. India's chief need is an increase of the purchasing power of her vast but poverty-stricken population..... Anything which adds to the gross income of India, adds to the trade of the world, and particularly of this country. At present India is endeavouring to achieve this end by stimulation of manufactures behind a protective tariff. . . . For the increase of Indian prosperity, a great expansion of capital investment for the equipment of the country with scientific means of production is required."

Britain's export trade to-day is full 20 per cent below the pre-war level causing a

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chronic depression of industry at home. This, in its turn, causes a decline in the rate of accumulation hindering the flow of capital abroad which could be the means of expanding the foreign market. There will be absolutely no way out of this vicious circle, if British imperialism fails to exploit the colonial market at an increasing rate. Its monopoly even on the colonial market, has of late been seriously threatened by new industrial countries with greater competing power. The following table illustrates how Britain is losing ground to others in the Indian market.

PROPORTION OF INDIA'S IMPORTS

From	1913	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
Britain	63	51	61	57	60	58	58	51	50%

India's exports to Britain proportionally declined from 81 per cent in 1913 to 21 per cent in 1925. So, British monopoly on the Indian market as well as on her source of raw materials, is seriously attacked. It can no longer be maintained in its old forms. Promotion of production in India under the hegemony of imperialist finance-capital, is the new form the monopoly should assume under

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the new conditions of capitalist decay in the metropolis. Thus, the measures introduced by imperialism to maintain its monopoly will have a “de-colonising” effect in so far as they will shift India from the state of economic stagnation to that of industrial development.

Discussing the report of the Indian Agricultural Commission which recommends measures for the rationalisation of agriculture with the object of increasing its productivity, the *Economist* (Aug. 11, '28) declares bluntly that “British rule is nearing the end of its utility”. What is meant by this statement? It would be naive to believe that the most authoritative, well-informed and sensible organ of British capitalism suggests a auto-liquidation of imperialism. What it suggests is that the old type of colonial rule has outlived its usefulness; it should now be replaced by a new form compatible with the changed condition.

A close examination of India's foreign trade throws more light on the situation. As observed above, the surplus of India's export is the medium through which colonial tributes are transferred to Britain. The state of this export—its source, intrinsic value and

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distribution, is, therefore, of great significance.

INTERNATIONAL BALANCE SHEET OF INDIA

(in millions of rupees)

	1918	1923	1924	1925	1926
Exports	2 490	3.490	3.892	3.858	3.095
Imports	1 910	2.410	2.482	2.242	2.302
Surplus of Export	580	1 080	1 460	1.611	798
Deduct value of gold and silver imported	370	400	948	519	398
Net surplus available for liquidating obligations abroad	210	680	517	1.092	400

Now, on the basis of various estimates, the interests, profits, dividends, commissions etc., on the total British capital invested in India, can be approximately calculated to be between 1000 and 1,200 millions of rupees. (These estimates apply only to the post-war years). The above table shows that the net surplus of India's exports, in the post-war years, has never covered this. The relative increase during the years 1923 to 1925 was more than counterbalanced by the fact that in the years 1920 and 1921 there was no surplus, the scale having inclined heavily on the other side. So, in the situation as it is, a considerable portion of the imperialist tribute remains uncollected.

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The effective collection and its application for the accumulation of capital in the possession of the British bourgeoisie, can take place either by its re-investment in India or by increasing the surplus of India's export. If neither of these can be done, then, India must be declared an insolvent debtor. That is, in that case, it would be evident that the recovery from the crisis of 1920-21 has been but superficial. The decline of Indian issues in London since 1923, proves that the uncollected tribute is not re-invested in India. Before the war,—even after it, up to 1923, re-investment in India was the prevailing method of collecting that portion of Indian revenue which was not covered by surplus export. In those days, the Indian issues in London roughly corresponded with the uncollected tributes from India. In view of the fact that in the last years the collection through surplus export has not increased materially, except in the year 1925, it can be assumed that the decline of new Indian issues in London indicates that heavy inroads have been made upon the income from India to maintain the equilibrium of Britain's inter-

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national balance sheet. This mysterious disappearance of a considerable portion of Indian revenue, explains how the British Board of Trade showed an appreciable increase of the income from external sources in the last year, after it had gone down beyond the zero level in 1926. British credit in India must have been written off to other imperialist countries in order to maintain Britain's position in the realm of international finance. This is a very serious situation. Industrial decay in Britain reduces her surplus of exportable capital. In addition to this, she is obliged to encroach heavily upon her Indian reserves to maintain her international position.

The above table illustrating India's international balance sheet reveals other features which render the situation still more alarming. For instance, by a forced reduction of imports, an export surplus was created to tide over the crisis of 1920-21. Until the last year the imports did not reach anywhere near the 1921-22 level. This shows a lasting contraction of the Indian market. Consequently, the inflated surplus dropped heavily again in 1926: for a restricted import could

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not but adversely affect the export trade. The world cannot buy from India except in exchange of commodities.

Another feature of India's foreign trade is that while the major part of her imports comes from Britain, her exports are largely taken by other countries. In 1926 about 51 per cent of her imports were supplied by Britain who, however, took only 21 per cent of her exports. Previously this disparity operated in favour of Britain. India's credit in other countries then represented so much British capital exported thereto. Now it is otherwise. Britain's surplus of exportable capital being insufficient, the countries buying from India pay her directly in commodities in ever-increasing amount. This means a progressive loss of the Indian market for Britain. That is, of late, an increasing volume of super-profit from India has been absorbed outside Britain. What is still worse for British imperialism is that the portion of India's surplus export to other countries, not covered by imports therefrom, now represents so much Indian capital exported outside the empire. Lately, growing Indian investments in American securities have occasioned

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much disquietude. Commenting on the subject, the *Economist* (Oct. 6, 1928) observes that "at present wealthier Indians have extensive interests in foreign securities". The cause of this diversion of Indian capital outside the empire, in the opinion of the journal, is the unattractiveness of the channels of investment in India. Therefore, the necessity of harnessing India's capital resources to counteract the declining accumulation in Britain—to check its flow outside the empire—forces upon British imperialism the previously undesirable and unsuitable policy of industrialising India. Otherwise the accumulated wealth of India will flow out of the empire, and the channel for this flow grows wider as the greater portion of India's exports must go to Britain's rivals. Imperialist monopoly is seriously shaken. The alternatives of the situation are to raise India to the level of a higher type of colony with productive forces less restricted than previously : or to allow her to deviate into the orbit of rival imperialist powers. The British bourgeoisie would be stupid indeed, should they make any mistake in choosing between these alternatives. They

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have not made the mistake. They have made the choice. They have adopted a policy, which in the long run is bound to have a suicidal repercussion upon themselves, under the pressure of conditions maturing in the period of capitalist decay.

But the crisis of British imperialism is so deep and complicated that there is no straight way out of it. There are many obstacles in the way of empire development through which the British bourgeoisie seek an exit out of the crisis. It is fraught with potential danger. Particularly is it so in India. Industrialisation of India requires capital. Were Britain in a position to supply the required capital, it would be an easy sailing ; but in that case, it would not be necessary for British imperialism to launch upon the dangerous new policy in India. The problem is clearly put by the *Liberal Industrial Inquiry Committee* in the following passage :

“The problem of imperial development has, however, been rendered far more acute by the very economic difficulties which make it at this moment doubly urgent and important.”

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The inability of Britain to provide sufficient capital, renders the industrialisation of India a comparatively slow process. At the same time the policy of industrialisation should be realised quickly enough so that it is not too late before its effects could improve Britain's position as a first class imperialist power. The problem can be solved by mobilising India's capital resources under the hegemony of imperialist finance. The defeat of the India Government on the question of the Reserve Bank indicated that the Indian bourgeoisie could not be drawn into the bargain on the terms of imperialism. But imperialism was not discouraged. It did not throw off the sponge. The policy of industrialising India was not scrapped. Only the tempo has been somewhat slowed down while the conditions for the rapid industrial development are being created. One of these conditions is a fair growth of the production of iron and steel inside the country. There are facts proving that this condition is being rapidly realised. The second condition is the rationalisation of agriculture with the object, firstly, of raising the purchasing power of the upper strata of the peasantry

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and secondly, of driving the poor peasants from their land.

The process of pauperisation has reached the limit. India is bankrupt. To hang on blindly to the old policy would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. It would be a grave mistake on our part to have such a low estimate of imperialist intelligence. By enthusiastically welcoming the recommendations of the Indian Agricultural Commission, imperialism shows its determination to act for the fulfilment of the second condition.

“Great capital projects already undertaken or in contemplation in India, promise a rehabilitation of British trade. Rising standard of living in India is likely to accommodate English-made luxuries. The growing demand for machinery, industrial plants and materials for mechanical transport—caused by the new policy of industrialisation—provides cause for hope.” (Frederick Sykes in a speech recently made at Sheffield after his appointment as the next Governor of Bombay.)

So, neither facts nor the perspective of the situation testifies that the policy of indus-

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trialising India has been essentially altered. As long as the conditions that forced the new policy upon imperialism, are in operation, there cannot be any change. And those determining conditions have not changed. They operate more disastrously to-day than several years ago. They are created by the decay of the roots of British capitalism. Imperialism being the ramification of capitalism, is bound to be affected by this decay at the latter's root.

Previously the Indian Government as a rule borrowed large sums in London. Since 1923 no India Government loan has been floated in the London market. On the other hand, the amount of capital raised inside the country has increased considerably. While between the years 1919 and 1924 the total value of Government of India securities held in Britain rose from 225.5 million pounds to 326.7 million pounds, the value of those held in India increased from 182.7 to 341 million pounds. When, in addition to this, we take into consideration the fact that since 1928 the Government of India has not borrowed in London, it becomes evident that the amount of capital raised in India is very much larger at present. This shows that the mobi-

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lisation of India's capital resources, so essential for the full realisation of the policy of industrialisation, is going on. Then the absence of new Indian issues in London, does not necessarily mean that no British capital is being invested in India. When any British company plans to undertake the building of an industrial plant or any other business enterprise in India, it does not always appear in the city for the required capital. Such companies are usually already connected with industry or trade in India, and as such, are owners of parts of the uncollected proceeds of British capital in India. And such investments are purely for productive purpose, for British capital invested in India as loans, bearing fixed rates of interest, is always raised through an issue in London. The form of investment not necessarily through an issue in London, is particularly suitable to the needs of the present situation. British capital invested in India through companies incorporated there with rupee capital, speedily multiplies itself by attracting Indian capital. This and other methods of mobilising India's capital resources under the control of imperialist finance, have been put into force.

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Although the determining factor is that the dynamics of the situation tend unmistakably and unwaveringly towards industrialisation, the case might still further be strengthened by giving some facts about the actual growth of the leading industries. Figures about the growth of the production of iron and steel, the basis of modern industry, have already been given. Interpreted in relative terms, those figures indicate that the production of pig-iron increased by 163 per cent between 1922 (when the protection was introduced) and 1926, in contrast with the growth of 67 per cent during the years 1913 to 1922 —the period of excessive war-production ; steel production in the latter period grew by 200 per cent as compared to 170 per cent in the preceding period. In the end of 1926, the *British Board of Trade Journal* foresaw continued increase in the production of steel in India and observed that the consumption of the steel produced, would require erection of new industrial plants. In 1927, the rate of protection to the iron and steel industry was again increased, obviously, to accelerate the process of its growth. In addition to the considerably increased production in the

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country, structural steel imported in 1926 was 64 per cent more than in 1913. The value of modern means of production (machinery, mill-works, railway-plants, electric-prime-movers etc.) as distinct from the means of transportation, as railway materials, in 1924, was four times as much as it was in 1913 ; after a slight downward movement in the following year, it regained the level in 1926 and exceeded it in the last year.

Further the iron-ores extracted in 1926 were three times as much as in 1919, and most of them were subjected to manufacturing process inside the country. Indian mills now produce finished cloth more than double of what they did in 1913. India's export of finished textile materials increases, simultaneously with the decrease in the export of half-manufactured goods, namely yarns. This shows that the cotton industry has grown not only in expansion, but, what is much more important, in its internal composition. It is no longer an auxiliary to the industrial system in the imperialist metropolis supplying semi-finished raw materials. It has become an independent productive factor—self-sufficient and

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competitive. Manufacture of tin-plates is not a basic industry. But its growth in India graphically illustrates the trend of the new economic policy of imperialism. The production of the industry has increased more than four times since 1923 when it received the shelter of the tariff wall. A further increase of not quite 100 per cent, and the level of the present consumption of the country will be reached. The manufacture of tin-plates requires very highly skilled labour which is not available in India. Nevertheless, by the adoption of the American method of mass production, as against the old British system of production with skilled labour, the industry has developed with amazing rapidity. The disparity in the wage-cost in Britain and in India, is so great that the Indian industry is expected to enter the world market with a very high competitive power, even without protection, after three years. The protection to this industry was granted in the teeth of strenuous opposition from the Welsh Tin-plate Manufacturers' Association which controls the industry in Great Britain. But the influence of the British Petroleum Trust was decisive. The tin-plate industry in India now

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serves as the connecting link between the British Petroleum Trust and the Indian Iron and Steel producers, the Tata and Co.

Indeed, compared with the vast expanse and population of India, the absolute significance of these figures is not very great. India still remains overwhelmingly an agricultural country. The historical significance of these figures is that they indicate a tendency. They show that the policy of imperialism is no longer to obstruct the industrial development of India. On the contrary, subject to the innumerable difficulties involved in it, the policy of imperialism at present is to foment industrial development in India. The very inner crisis of imperialism which has obliged it to alter the methods of exploiting India, renders the process uneven and zigzag.

The facts, on the contrary, clearly and conclusively prove that the theory of "agrarianisation" is utterly wrong. In his economic survey of the first quarter of the current year Comrade Varga⁴ also came to similar conclusions. He wrote :—

"We can affirm that statistical data estab-

4. Varga was for many years the official economic and statistical expert of the Communist International.

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blish the existence of tendencies towards industrialisation which run contrary to the general tendency of capitalism to turn the colonies into areas of raw material production” (*Imprecorr.* Engl. Ed. Vol. 8. No. 45.)

Referring particularly to India he rejects the theory of agrarisation, and says :—

“There can be no doubt that India is a more highly industrialised country now than it was fifty years ago.” (*Ibid*).

Today India is more industrialised not only than she was fifty years ago, but than in 1922 which year marks the turning point in the imperialist policy—the year in which the former policy of free trade was discarded and protection was granted to Indian industries. And as this epoch-making event occurred after the Second World Congress of the Communist International, my view of the situation today is not a revision of the passage quoted by Comrade Kuusinen from the thesis of the Second Congress. Estimation of the economic and political situation of the world, of a particular country, cannot be absolute. It must be constantly re-adjusted to changing conditions.

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The theory that colonies can serve the interests of imperialism only and exclusively as the source of raw material, corroborates Kautsky's definition of imperialism as the annexation of agricultural territories by advanced capitalist countries, a definition severely criticised by Lenin. So long as mercantilist and industrial capital remains the dominating factor in the metropolis, economic backwardness of the colonies corresponds to the interests of imperialism. But the situation ceases to be so, as a rule, with the rise of finance capital. And as modern imperialism coincides with the rise of finance capital, it is not possible to assert that colonies must necessarily always remain in an industrially backward state as a source of raw material production. The growth of the parasitic character of finance capital and the decay of production in the metropolis, render industrial development of the colonies not only possible, but necessary for the existence of imperialism. If production of raw materials was the basic rôle of a colony, then India can no longer be of much value for the British Empire. Indeed, judged from that standard, she could never have been of much value. For,

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Britain's share in the exports from India has never been very large. Over 60 p.c. of India's exports always went to other countries. Now Britain's share is reduced to 21 per cent. Previously Indian exports to foreign countries represented export of British capital there to. Britain's inability to export capital no longer permits her to be benefitted by the raw products of India. Then, industrial decay reduces the volume of raw material imported into Britain. So, if colonies were useful only or primarily as sources of raw materials, Britain is no longer in a position to exploit colonies. Therefore it is not possible to lay down a hard and fast rule determining the relations between the colonies and the imperialist metropolis in all periods and under all conditions. The relation has only one fundamental principle, and that is the exploitation of the colonies by the imperialist country. When it is profitable for imperialism to hold the colonies as source of raw material for the industrial metropolis, the policy is to obstruct the development of the modern means of production there ; when the conditions change, and owing to industrial decay in the metropolis, the raw product of the colonies cannot be

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disposed of profitably, in the old method, their manufacture in the colonies into commodities becomes the more suitable means of exploiting the latter. As manufactured commodities contain more surplus value produced by the colonial toiling masses than in raw products, the super-profit for imperialism becomes greater, when the new method of exploitation is applied. So, under certain condition, industrialisation of the colonies is in the very nature of imperialism.

Only in the light of this new policy of imperialism can we make a correct estimation of the political situation in India. If there were no change in the policy of imperialism, if it were true as Comrade Bukharin asserted in his political report to the VI Congress, that, on the contrary, “British Imperialism has increased its colonial oppression of India in general and of *the Indian bourgeoisie in particular*”, (Italics are mine, M. N. R.), then his observation made in the same report that “it is inconceivable that the (Indian) bourgeoisie will play a revolutionary rôle for any length of time” cannot be wholly correct. In that case, it could not be automatically clear that “the politics of the

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Indian bourgeoisie are not revolutionary politics" as Comrade Kuusinen asserted in his report on the colonial question. The Indian bourgeoisie cannot be assumed to be fond of being oppressed or constitutionally averse to revolutionary politics. If they cannot be expected to take up a revolutionary fight against Imperialism, that is because the new economic policy of imperialism permits the economic development of their class. On the background of a compromise as regards the essentials of the situation, certain section of the bourgeoisie is simply manœuvring to secure the most favourable position possible. The counter-manœuvre of Imperialism also to occupy the most favourable position, cannot be called new "oppression, particularly of the Indian bourgeoisie".

The great revolutionary mass movement of 1920-21 could not be suppressed by Imperialism. It was betrayed and liquidated by the bourgeoisie as soon as Imperialism indicated its willingness to make some economic concession. In the beginning of the year, the boycott of the Simon Commission also was not suppressed by Imperialism. It was sabotaged by the bourgeoisie who, as a matter of fact,

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never wanted it. Step by step, the bourgeoisie have abandoned the boycott, and at this moment the leaders of the boycott parties are carrying on negotiation with the Simon Commission behind the scene. Why do the nationalist bourgeois act in this way? Because the new economic policy of Imperialism makes considerable concessions to Indian capitalism. As soon as a way out of the political *impasse* is found, the bourgeoisie will settle down to work on the basis of these concessions. By conclusively formulating their demands as "Dominion Status within the British Empire", cynically violating the resolution of the National Congress, they have set their face against further political commotion except of the harmless parliamentary brand. They have accepted junior partnership with Imperialism, on principle ; only the details of the bargain now remain to be settled.

The "de-colonising" effect of the new policy touches only the bourgeoisie. The masses of India will remain in the state of colonial slavery even after the process of "de-colonisation" culminates in the grant of dominion status. But parallel to the economic concessions made to Indian capitalism, there

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has been a transformation in the political position of the Indian bourgeoisie, and still further transformation is going to take place in the near future. It is still an open question how near to their coveted dominion status will the Indian bourgeoisie arrive in consequence of the constitutional tug-of-war at present in play. But there is no doubt that the result will be a further advance towards the goal. Politically and economically, the burden of colonial regime on the bourgeoisie has been reduced since the war, and will be further reduced in the near future. This can be reasonably and historically reckoned as process of "de-colonisation" as far as it goes, as far as the bourgeoisie are concerned. And this relative liberation of the class interests of the bourgeoisie from the deadening grip of the old form of colonial exploitation, is the cause of their deviation from the revolutionary path towards a compromise with Imperialism.

In his report, Comrade Kuusinen purposely did not touch the self-governing colonies like Canada, Australia, South-Africa etc., because, in his opinion, they are practically independent capitalist countries. If the self-

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governing colonies are not to be reckoned as colonies proper, then it is but logical to infer that in proportion as India approaches the status of a self-governing colony, she undergoes a process of "de-colonisation," in a limited sense as far as the bourgeoisie are concerned. Now let us chronicle some facts illustrating the access of political rights, even some power, to the Indian bourgeoisie since the war.

Until the war, politically, the Indian bourgeoisie together with the rest of the population, were in a state of practically complete suppression. The reforms of 1909 did not alter their position essentially. The net result of those reforms was that some higher grade of the public services was made accessible to the upper strata of the bourgeoisie. But the reforms of 1919 were different. They were much less than what had been promised by imperialism to assure the loyalty of the Indian bourgeoisie during the war. Nevertheless, they did confer upon the bourgeoisie considerable political rights and even some elements of power. These reforms were relatively of great importance, in view of the fact that until the war, the bourgeoisie,

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as a class, had been as unfranchised, as the rest of the population.

The Reforms of 1919 enfranchised not only the bourgeoisie, but even the upper strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie. A very large majority of the Central as well as the Provincial legislatures was to be elected. Provincial Executives were made partially responsible to the legislature no less than 70 per cent of which was elected. The administration of agriculture, industry, local self-government, education and sanitation was given over to Indian ministers under the control of the legislature. In administrative units lower than the provincial government, much greater place was conceded to the bourgeoisie ; for example, the administration of the premier city of the country, Calcutta, was completely in the hands of the nationalist. The administration of the city of Bombay has also been largely under nationalist control. Even in the central government the native bourgeoisie can wield a considerable amount of pressure upon the executive, if they have the courage. They are at least in a position to impede seriously the smooth operation of the executive machinery,

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if this would not be somewhat amenable to their influence. This was demonstrated during the years 1924 and 1925 when the nationalist members of the legislature acted as a solid opposition block.

All these superficial concessions did not alter the fact that the state-power ultimately remained with imperialism ; but within this limit, the Indian bourgeoisie were given considerable elbow-room. In view of the fact that the programme of the nationalist bourgeoisie has never been complete conquest of power from imperialism (when India is raised to the status of a self-governing Dominion, imperialism will still remain the paramount power), this limited accession to rights and power was not negligible from their angle of vision. The Reforms of 1919 were a step towards self-government, as far as the bourgeoisie were concerned. By the upper strata of their class, the Reforms were from the beginning recognized as such. The lower strata criticised and for a short time boycotted them, not on their merit, but as not sufficient.

The majority of the members of the Commissions (Industrial Commission, Fiscal

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Commission, Currency Commission, Agricultural Commission) whose findings constituted the basis of the new economic policy of imperialism, were representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie. The chairman of the Fiscal Commission, on whose recommendation protectionism became the policy of the government, was an Indian industrial magnate. The highest state offices, only excluding the Viceroyalty, are to-day open to the Indians, and not a few of them are actually occupied.

In a number of occasions the Indian bourgeoisie have exercised their political rights to the discomfort of imperialism. So much so that the most short-sighted die-hard elements among the British residents in India have demanded the revocation of the reforms. The following are some of the most noteworthy occasions: the Tariff Board set up by the Government to consider the claims of industries applying for protection, is composed of three members, two of these are Indians. After admitting the claims of a series of industries, largely or exclusively owned by Indians, the other day the Tariff Board rejected the claim of the Burma Oil

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Company. It also rejected the claim of the match industry which has been acquired by the Swedish Trust. The Government by exercising its reserve power could disregard the verdict of the Tariff Board, but it did not, showing its disposition to concede some power to the Indian bourgeoisie in return for their collaboration in mobilising India's capital resources. The bourgeoisie feel themselves in a position to bargain with imperialism for more favourable conditions. Recently, a private member's bill providing for the reservation of the coastal carrying-trade to Indian shipping, was carried through the Legislative Assembly in the teeth of Government opposition. The Government may sabotage the full application of the proposed measure ; but it has no power to prevent its enactment. Finally, there is the Public Safety Bill which the Government wanted to pass by all means in order to close the doors of India to foreign Communists. Such an eminently political measure, needed for the exercise of power, was thrown out by the nationalist majority, and the Government reconciled itself to the situation dropping the legislation so earnestly desired.

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The Indian bourgeoisie are not going to have their demand for "equal partnership within the Empire" (Dominion Status) satisfied in the immediate future. But they are on the verge of making another considerable advance in that direction. In spite of the exclusion of Indians from its composition, and the opposition of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Simon Commission is sure to find that the political rights and powers of the Indian bourgeoisie should be increased so that the smooth operation of the new economic policy of imperialism, is assured. Since the appointment of the Simon Commission, both the sides have gradually modified their respective attitudes, and at present only formalities and "political face" stand in the way to agreement. Although the composition of the Simon Commission still remains formally purely British, representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie and landed aristocracy, have been drawn in to collaborate, practically on the same footing, with the original Commission. Thus the section of the bourgeoisie boycotting the Commission has been completely outmanœuvred. For the sake of saving political face, this section must keep up a

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formal opposition ; but they are sure to end up as their prototype in Egypt (the Zaghlulist Wafd) did in connection with the Milner Commission ; they will finally accept the concessions made on the basis of the recommendations of the Simon Commission after having boycotted it. Very likely they will do so under formal protest.

The disappearance of the representative of die-hard imperialism, Birkenhead, from the political arena, indicates which way the wind blows in the imperialist camp. Other signs are also noticeable indicating that the political position of the Indian bourgeoisie will be improved in the near future. For example, the Associated Chambers of (British) Commerce of India in its memorandum to the Simon Commission recommends that provincial administration should be completely (including finance and police) given over to the Indians (bourgeoisie). It also suggests transfer of some power in the Central Government, subject to the supremacy of the Viceroy. The *Economist* of London, on August 11th, while making the very significant statement "British rule is nearing the end of its utility" quoted above, observes

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that "in the provincial sphere British management of Indian affairs may be visualised as on the eve of complete and compulsory liquidation." At the same time the journal anticipates that in the central administration British control may continue still for a short period. The project of Indian constitutional reform as a self-governing dominion inside the British Empire, worked out by the bourgeoisie nationalist leaders, has been sympathetically commented upon in the imperialist press. A furtive negotiation around that document is even now going on between the Simon Commission and the bourgeois nationalist leaders.

So, the immediate perspective of the present situation in India is the grant of further political rights to the bourgeoisie. Only in the light of this perspective, it becomes "inconceivable that the Indian bourgeoisie will play a revolutionary rôle for any length of time." A gradual advance of the Indian bourgeoisie from the state of absolute colonial oppression to self-government within the British Empire, is taking place. Therefore, it is not necessary for them to travel the risky path of revolu-

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tion. In other words, progressive “de-colonisation” of their economic and political status makes the Indian bourgeoisie averse to revolution, and in the near future, when “de-colonisation” of their class has gone further, it will make them positively counter-revolutionary. Transfer of some political power to the colonial bourgeoisie does not weaken imperialism; because the native bourgeoisie wield this power, not to further develop the struggle against imperialism, but to suppress the revolutionary movement. This has been demonstrated by the experience in other colonial countries.

“De-colonisation” of the Indian bourgeoisie, thus, is not an “illusion”. It is a fact which is the key to the situation. Only by estimating the situation in the light of this fact, can we establish what Comrade Kuusinen very correctly said in his report : “The mission of freeing India has been conferred by history on the Indian workers and peasants”. The workers and peasant masses cannot be mobilised to undertake their historic mission consciously on the slogan—“The Sahib is a robber.” They must know that the native bourgeoisie are the accomplit-

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ces of the foreign ‘sahib,’ and therefore, will never carry on a revolutionary fight for national liberation. “The sahib will never de-colonise India” of the workers and peasants but nor will the Indian bourgeoisie lead the people to national freedom. And this must be courageously told and clearly demonstrated to the workers and peasants to make them conscious of their historic mission. Comrade Kuusinen or any other comrade will search in vain to detect me ever spreading the illusion among the workers and peasants that “the sahib will de-colonise” them. On the contrary, what Comrade Kuusinen to-day says about the historic mission of the Indian workers and peasants, I began propagating years ago when not a few leading comrades entertained illusions about the rôle of the nationalist bourgeoisie.

'A LETTER TO THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,*

We deeply deplore the disunity among the proletarian revolutionaries in this country. We are numerically weak, but are called upon to perform a tremendous task under very difficult and delicate conditions. A strong (qualitatively), well organised, clear-sighted, cleverly led Communist Party is the crying need of the situation of this country. Elements to go into the rise of such a party are there, though still largely in the form of raw material. Nevertheless, even to-day there is no such party. The Communist Party of India is a small sect, isolated from the political life of the country. As such, it is utterly unable to influence the situation. This woeful position is the result of the mistaken tactical line followed ever since 1929.

Keenly conscious of the magnitude of the task confronting the Indian proletariat,

*Written in 1935, before the VII World Congress, the resolution of which must have been influenced by the facts reported in the document—M. N. R.

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also of the numerical weakness of the revolutionary vanguard of our class, we are very eager to close our thin ranks into a United Communist Party, so that, under your guidance, we shall be able to play creditably our difficult rôle in the Indian revolution. But the manifest futility and harmfulness of the policy pursued by the comrades acting on your authority, made it impossible for us to join the C. P. of India. Unity is highly desirable; it is urgently needed; we are eager to realise it. But there is no use uniting on a wrong line; and the C. P. of India stubbornly sticks to the line which has been proved by experience to be not only wrong but harmful. By joining the C. P. as it is to-day, we would also be isolated from the masses; we would also be deprived of the possibilities of acquiring a position of decisive importance; we would also be unable to swell the ranks of the proletarian revolutionaries with recruits from the politically active workers, peasants and declassed intellectuals, who even to-day follow the National Congress.

All our efforts to persuade the C. P. to change its policy, in the light of lessons learnt

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from bitter experience, so that all proletarian revolutionaries could get together in a united party, have failed. If some of our comrades would not learn from their own experience, would stubbornly blind themselves from the realities of the situation, would prefer splendid isolation to fruitful mass activity, we should not stultify ourselves by going their mistaken way. That is not the way for the rise of a C. P. in this country—a party that, in the near future, could be an effective factor in the political life of the country; could bid for the leadership of the oppressed and exploited masses, not in mere words but in convincing deeds; could raise the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher level; could decisively influence the development and perspective of the Indian revolution. The dreary and distressing record of the C. P. ever since 1929 definitely proves that it has run into a blind alley. Revolutionary conscience, regard for reality, devotion for the cause for communism, compel us to strike out a new path.

The C. P. of India lives only on your authority. Take away this support and the group will disintegrate. It has no root in the

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soil. Your support is secured by magnified reports of activities and influence. The reports make a wrong impression upon you, and prevent you from realising the incorrectness of the policy inaugurated by the Sixth World Congress. We are sure that, provided with a correct picture of the situation, and informed of the negative consequence of the policy pursued ever since 1929, you will modify your opinion about the character and perspective of the Indian revolution, and direct your Indian Section to follow henceforth a different course. Therefore, we are giving you in this letter a general idea of the situation as it really is, hoping that it will be given dispassionate consideration with the object of formulating a realistic policy to be pursued by all the proletarian revolutionaries in this country.

We draw your attention to the following outstanding facts of the situation in this country :—

I. The immaturity of the proletariat. It is not only weak numerically ; it is formed but partially as a class. The strikes are rather the results of elementary revolt against intolerable conditions of daily life than symp-

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toms of revolutionary class consciousness. Even among workers, more or less under Communist leadership, as for example, in Bombay cotton mills, there are very few who grasp the rudimentary ideas of class struggle, and are consciously inclined towards Communism. The working class as a whole is socially immature, politically backward, organisationally weak.

2. Only a very small fraction of the industrial workers (hardly 10%) is organised. A very small section of organised workers is under the Communist influence. Practically all the big trade unions (of the Railway workers, for example) are under reformist leadership. The dominating political tendency is nationalist, most of the prominent Trade Union leaders being Congressmen. "The Red T. U. C." is a paper organisation. Its membership is limited to the C. P., its sympathisers and supporters; that is to say, to a couple of hundred people. Not one single important trade union is affiliated to it. The original T. U. Congress also is a weak body embracing a minority of the organised workers. The majority are in the Trade Union Federation.

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3. The peasant masses are unaffected by any other political propaganda than that of the National Congress. The countryside is the scene of seething discontent, aggravated by the current agrarian crisis. But there is no symptom of any widespread revolutionary awakening. The political consciousness of the peasantry is represented by the adoration for Gandhi, and confidence in the National Congress as their champion. Communist propaganda finds no response in the village. Communist agitators have been driven out of the villages for abusing Gandhi and the National Congress. The political notion of the rural population, indeed also of the urban masses, is monarchistic. They can hardly think of the Government of a country without a king.

4. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia is the most active political element. Practically all the recruits for the Communist movement so far have come from that class. But nationalist pre-occupations are generally very powerful. Political activity of the petty bourgeois intellectual takes place either in the National Congress or in the terrorist movement. This latter has of late shown

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signs of development in the direction of the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Russia. It is isolated from the masses; has no understanding or regard for the social problems; is fanatically nationalistic in cultural questions. In short, Fascist tendency is to be discerned in the terrorist movement. At the same time there is a process of radicalisation, socially. This process may advance towards Communism. The petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the National Congress are more or less in touch with the masses. They are getting more and more concerned with social problems, in a rather reformist, sentimental, humanitarian sense than with a consciously revolutionary purpose. This tendency has lately crystallized in the so-called Congress Socialist Party. There is a process of radicalisation in the democratic *bourgeois revolutionary* sense. But the process is retarded by the prevalence of the reactionary utopian Gandhist ideology. The radically inclined petty bourgeois intellectuals are without a leadership. Yet they are not ready to accept it from the proletariat *directly*. Nor is the proletariat as a class in a position to offer such leadership as yet.

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5. The National Congress offers the rallying ground to the oppressed and exploited classes in their struggle against imperialism. It commands the confidence of the masses. It is not a homogeneous political party. It is a movement which expresses the highest degree of political consciousness of the masses. The leadership of the Congress is not the Congress. There is objective contradiction between the present leadership, which is under the influence of the middle bourgeoisie, and the Congress as a movement. There is social basis for an alternative radical democratic leadership to replace the present outfit. The rise of such a leadership is necessary for the next stage of the revolution.

6. It is an illusion to think that the workers and peasants are dissatisfied with the Congress. No mass movement can be organised in opposition to the Congress. Those making such attempts are sure to be isolated from the masses as has been the experience of the C. P. of India. The Congress is not disintegrating, although it is involved in a crisis. The absence of an organised left-wing has enabled the right-winger to capture the leadership. If the position of the right

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is not challenged by an alternative radical democratic leadership, the entire nationalist mass movement will come under the reactionary influence of the bourgeoisie. Then the Congress would become a bourgeois nationalist party. The result of such an eventuality will be disastrous. The mass movement will be decomposed. The Congress will disintegrate, but there will be no new mass organisation to take its place.

7. Owing to its broad class basis, the National Congress can be transformed into an instrument of revolutionary (democratic) struggle. The petty bourgeois intelligentsia, in collaboration with the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, can provide the necessary alternative leadership. The next stages of the Indian revolution must develop under that type of leadership—under the hegemony (not leadership) of the proletariat. No other type of revolutionary leadership can possibly rise out of the background of the social composition of the forces of revolution, of the given relation of classes. To talk of an independent proletarian leadership is to indulge in a vain fantasy. The proletariat is not yet able to play that rôle. To begin with,

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it must develop as a class, and that is conditional upon the accomplishment of the basic task of the belated bourgeois revolution, and the rapid industrialisation of the country under *democratic dictatorship*. The revolutionary leadership needed to-day must raise the banner not of Communism, but of Jacobinism. We must remember Lenin's remarks on introducing the New Economic Policy : there can be no proletarian dictatorship without the proletariat ; let us first create the proletariat. Under the present world conditions, and thanks to the impossibility of solving India's economic problems (particularly the agrarian problem) on the basis of capitalist production, Jacobinism cannot degenerate into bourgeois democracy. Democratic dictatorship is the road to Socialism in India.

8. The National Congress, with its broad social basis and tremendous influence upon the masses, is the typical instrument created by peculiar conditions under which the anti-imperialist struggle had to take place,—an instrument admirably suited for the purpose of opening up the road to democratic dictatorship.

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9. The National Congress with its wide-spread net-work of a skeleton organisation, given a revolutionary democratic dictatorship, (and the objective conditions for the rise of such a leadership are ripening) can serve as the instrument in the struggle for the capture of power by the oppressed and exploited masses, and eventually be converted into the organ of democratic power of the revolutionary state.

10. Local Congress Committees in a revolutionary crisis can function as instruments of mass uprisings and become the basic units of the revolutionary state. They render the establishment of the Soviet State a matter of practical possibility.

The activities of the C. P. of India disregarded all these realities and possibilities of the situation. The blunders are not merely tactical. A radically wrong, un-Marxian theory of revolution distorts the vision of the comrades who operate in this country on your authority, and are unfortunately backed up by you. They represent the spirit of Blanquism. They wish to make a revolution to order. They do not know that the character and perspective of a revolution are

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determined by the conditions under which it takes place, and that the tactical policy of the revolutionary party should be guided by the character and perspective of the revolution.

We shall point only the most flagrant mistakes committed by the C. P. of India, and the harmful effects of these mistakes not only upon the development of the revolutionary movement, but also upon the growth of the C. P. itself :

1. Faulty analysis of the forces of revolution. The consequent failure to appreciate correctly the social composition of those forces. Wrong notion about the character and perspective of the Indian revolution in the earlier stages. Disregard for the fact that the task of the bourgeois democratic revolution is still to be accomplished in this country, and that owing to its immaturity, the proletariat is not in a position to do that single-handed, without the collaboration of the peasantry and the semi-proletarianised urban petty-bourgeoisie. The inability to realise that this collaboration cannot take place on the terms dictated by the proletariat, but only on the platform of

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revolutionary democratic freedom. In short, the C. P. of India forgot, or never learnt, one of the fundamental lessons of Marxism derived from the history of class struggle: namely, that a revolutionary class creates the conditions for its own emancipation by liberating the entire society from the established form of class domination. The liberation of the Indian society from foreign imperialism and the native reaction will create conditions for the emancipation of the Indian proletariat. The immediate task of the proletariat is to work for that emancipation. The proletariat will accomplish this task by rallying the oppressed and the exploited masses in this struggle for the realisation of the programme of democratic national revolution. The C. P. of India has failed to lead the proletariat towards the accomplishment of this task.

2. Disregard of the nationalist character of the revolution. Owing to this failure, the C. P. of India underestimated the influence of Gandhi and the usefulness of the National Congress as an instrument in the struggle against imperialism. This mistake isolated the C. P. from the Nationalist masses

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including not only the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, but the proletariat itself. The isolation from the forces of revolution seriously obstructed the growth of the C. P. which consequently remained a small sect.

3. To look upon the National Congress as the political party of the bourgeoisie, instead of appreciating it—as it really is—as a movement embracing a variety of classes and sub-classes. From this wrong estimation of the Congress resulted the failure to distinguish between the objectively revolutionary rank and file and the subjectively anti-revolutionary leadership of the Congress. Another result was the highly reprehensible policy of attacking the left wing as well as the right wing. The way to the liberation of the Congress from the bourgeois influence and its consequent conversion into a militant mass organisation, is the overthrow of the Gandhist leadership and its replacement by a radical democratic leadership. Under the dangerous illusion that the nationalist masses can be brought under proletarian leadership, and the anti-imperialist struggle developed as a part of the proletarian revolution, the C. P. refuses to

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foment the rise of the radical petty bourgeois left wing inside the National Congress, and to help it in the struggle against the bourgeois-Gandhist right wing. The C. P. started on this grievously mistaken path in 1928 when the right-wing leadership of the National Congress was seriously menaced by the left wing. Instead of rallying the peasants and workers in support of the leftwing, disregarding for the moment the antiquity of its social programme, the C. P. declared it to be the greater danger, and foolishly denounced it as the veiled agent of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and reactionary Gandhism. That foolish policy started from the estimation of the National Congress as the party of the bourgeoisie. It has been stubbornly pursued ever since, and has contributed considerably to the present debacle of the anti-imperialist struggle. In the absence of mass pressure, exerted under the influence of the C. P., the petty bourgeois left wing was easily placated by the right-wing leaders who thus retained the control of the Congress machinery. Objectively revolutionary forces remained under non-revolutionary leadership. Their will to fight was not developed. Their field of acti-

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vity was restricted by the Gandhist tactics of passive resistance which was bound to end in capitulation.

4. The policy of the C. P., pursued ever since 1928, of standing outside the National Congress, of denouncing it as a counter-revolutionary body, meant voluntary withdrawal of the proletarian vanguard from the field of its operation. Had it stood by its post in the midst of the forces of revolution, it could have extended its influence over them, won their confidence by virtue of participating in the same struggle with them, and gradually guided them out of the paralysing control of the non-revolutionary leaders. But that was a difficult road to travel. The C. P. of India suffering from the infantile malady of ultra-leftism chose the easy line of least resistance. It was simple to abuse all but the small band of youthful Communists as counter-revolutionaries, and talk of rallying the masses in an anti-imperialist struggle under independent proletarian leadership, outside the National Congress. The masses, however, refused to rally under the new flag, and steadfastly followed Gandhi under the banner of the National Congress. Thanks to the fool-

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ishness of abusing popular left-wing leaders, the C. P. alienated the sympathy of even the most radical elements in the National Congress from which source, under the given conditions of India, the leading cadre of the working class party must be recruited. The responsibility of the defeat of the anti-imperialist movement of India must be shared by the C. P., because it would not pursue the policy advocated by its pioneers and practised previously with satisfactory results, a policy that might have precluded the defeat by strengthening the movement from inside—through a process of class differentiation resulting from the experience gained in actual struggle; through a democratisation of the leadership; through a radicalisation of the program under the pressure of the masses; through the adoption of more effective forms of militant mass struggle.

5. The grievous mistake of the C. P. of India has been the idealisation of the proletariat. Disregarding all the realities, the C. P. entertained the fantastic idea that the revolutionary class consciousness of the Indian proletariat has attained a high degree of development, and consequently it is fit to assume

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the leadership of the revolution even in the present bourgeois democratic stage. The deluded comrades are simply carried away by their overenthusiasm, and presumably have been misleading you with grossly overdrawn pictures of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. As a matter of fact, notwithstanding its potential importance, at present, the proletariat plays a minor rôle in the scheme of Indian politics ; and whatever rôle it plays, is still heavily coloured with the nationalist sentiment.

6. The overestimation of the actual significance of the proletariat leads to the corresponding undervaluation of the importance of other elements involved in the revolution, no less fundamentally than the proletariat. This disproportionate view of the relation of classes involved in the revolution does not permit the C. P. to realise the urgent necessity of the alliance of the revolutionary classes in the struggle for democratic national freedom. Yet the proletariat will eventually assume the leadership of the revolution on the strength of the hegemony that it will exercise in this struggle, and the initiative in the formation of the historically necessary revolu-

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tionary alliance will place it in the position to exercise the hegemony in the struggle. No use advocating this alliance in word as the C. P. has been lately doing, while the C. P. stands outside the alliance already formed in the National Congress, and actually declared its determination to break it up. The C. P. believes that all it has got to do is to hold high the standard of revolution dyed in pure red, and the oppressed and exploited classes will automatically flock under it. Experience has proved the futility of this method. Yet the C. P. would not learn. It is for you, comrades, to remind these ultra-left enthusiasts of Lenin's famous injunction : that the revolutionary party must be where the masses are. And it is time that all concerned with the revolutionary movement in this country realise the palpable fact that the National Congress is the rallying ground of the masses.

7. The exaggerated notion about the revolutionary class consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat has induced the C. P. of India to pursue a suicidal policy as regards the organisation of the working class. Trade unions under its control are not mass organi-

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sations, because the program of the party is imposed on them. As a matter of fact the C. P. does not seem to know the difference between the political party of the proletariat and the trade union. Thanks to this deplorable ignorance it split the T. U. Congress. Owing to its disregard for the fact that the trade union has a specific function, it failed to retain the big unions in the T. U. Congress when it came under its control. After the split (at Nagpur in 1929), during the brief period when the T. U. C. was completely under the control of the communists, there was a conspicuous absence of any mass activity. Instead of developing the T. U. C. into a powerful mass organisation, the Communists, thanks to this ultra-leftism, drove all the big unions out. At the same time, under Communist leadership, the T. U. C. passed resolutions calling for a political general strike. The result was the decomposition of the T. U. C., and the rise of the reformist Trade Union Federation controlling a majority of the organised workers. When Communists, who disagreed with this suicidal policy, tried to reconstruct the T. U. C., the C. P. again split that depleted body because

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it would not follow the ruinous policy any longer. The C. P., under the name of the Red T. U. C., fiercely opposed our efforts, supported by a number of left-wing T. U. leaders, to establish unity in the labour movement on the platform of the struggle for enforcing a series of partial demands for the workers. Splitting tactics have isolated the C. P. from the ranks of the organised workers. Even the Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay, as far back as 1929, repudiated Communist leadership after this had all but destroyed the once-powerful organisation. Its membership was down to a mere few hundreds. On their failing to get re-elected to the offices of the union, the Communists left the union, and started a rival organisation which has never become a trade union with any mass support. We have reconstructed the Girni Kamgar Union and re-established the Communist influence over it. But the C. P. fights constantly this popular organisation of Bombay textile workers and makes repeated efforts to split it again.

We earnestly believe that you will easily realise the harmfulness of these mistakes committed in this country on your authority, and

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rectify them without delay. These mistakes have prevented the anti-imperialist struggle from being re-inforced by the influence of the C. I., as was the case in other colonial countries, and also in this, previously. These mistakes are positively injurious to the cause of Communism and proletarian world revolution, because they decisively obstructed the growth of the C. P., and the revolutionary activity of the working class. Further development of the anti-imperialist struggle, under the banner of the democratic freedom, is conditional upon the appearance of a revolutionary democratic leadership in the National Congress ; and this, in its turn, can rise only on the foundation of a fighting alliance of the oppressed and exploited classes, formed on the initiative of the C. P., under the hegemony of the proletariat. Obviously the C. P. shall not be able to rise up to its task before it can function as an active factor in the political life of this country, closely connected with the masses, winning their confidence progressively by virtue of participating in their struggles. And to be an effective political factor, the C. P. must abandon the course it has been following since 1928—

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a course that has led to isolation, and the consequent political stultification.

The document¹ attached herewith sets forth what, in our opinion, is the correct communist policy under the given conditions of this country. It is formulated on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the situation, and realist appreciation of the available forces of revolution.

A revolutionary party must operate with the forces available. The magnification of the potentiality of the available forces will only lead us to grief. Experience has borne out the correctness of the policy and programme of action advocated by us. Working under great difficulties, the most regrettable of them being the vicious attack by the C. P., we have made satisfactory progress in a short time. It is exclusively through our efforts that the right-wing leaders of the Congress have been forced to endorse the demand for the Constituent Assembly—a demand that challenges the authority of the British Parliament, and thus raises the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher stage which must

1. A comprehensive programme for a C. P. in India. It was subsequently published as "Our Task."

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eventually culminate into armed insurrection. The opposition of the C. P. was one of the factors that delayed our success in this respect. When, in 1931, we sought to rally the Congress rank and file against the "Peace Pact" of Gandhi and his participation in the Round Table Conference, with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly, the C. P. joined forces with the politically backward Gandhists in the opposition. We are painfully aware of the fact that you also disapproved of the slogan ; but today, in view of your changed attitude as regards the defence of the parliamentary democratic freedom of Europe, you should reconsider your position on the question of the propriety of the Communists supporting the demand for a Constituent Assembly in this country. The crux of the question is the character and perspective of the Indian revolution. Reports, deeply coloured with subjectivism, written by people unable to make a Marxian analysis of the given relation of the classes, and reluctant to recognise realities,—such misleading reports persuaded you to take a wrong view of the character and perspective of the Indian Revolution. Acquaintance with the facts as they

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are, will convince you that the character of the Indian revolution in the next stages will necessarily be bourgeois democratic ; that the conditions in which the task of the bourgeois revolution may be accomplished under proletarian dictatorship, are not ripe in this country. It is foolish romanticism to aim at proletarian dictatorship in the near future in this country ; and it may not be an indispensable necessity later on. For the time being, a democratic revolution must develop with slogans appropriate for a struggle of that nature. The perspective is the perspective of democratic dictatorship.

We beseech you to give serious and dispassionate consideration to the facts indicated, and arrive at your own conclusions. We are sure that it will be a correct conclusion. Marxist principles, Leninist realism and revolutionary experience will enable you to realise the correctness of our position, and the necessity of changing accordingly the policy pursued by the C. P. of India. Such a decision on your part will render great assistance to the forces of revolution in this country. It will instantly unite the vanguard of these forces into a single organisation, free

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of the deficiencies that have hitherto hindered its development into an effectively functioning political party. We confidently hope that you will not fail to take such measures as will enable all the Communists in this country to stand together under the banner of the C. I., and perform their delicate and difficult task under your guidance.

PART TWO

ON ROYISM

By

V. B. KARNIK

WHAT ROY STANDS FOR

The so-called left-wingers had their own ideas as to what Comrade Roy should do after his release from jail. They wanted him to stand aloft on the Olympian heights of impracticable theories and romantic dreams. They wanted him to keep aloof from the actual work of mobilising and organising the radical forces, but to act merely as a sympathiser, as an adviser, as a guiding star. They could have then adored him as a hero and boosted him as a great revolutionary. Comrade Roy, however, had his own ideas, and preferred not to play the rôle allotted to him by those who were afraid of being outshined. Always an active revolutionary, he went straight to the task of organising the people in their revolutionary struggle. He did not appreciate the rôle of a highly applauded, but an ineffective hero. He refused to isolate himself on the Olympian heights. He joined the ranks of the people, and moving in their midst, thinking their thoughts, and giving expression to their feelings and aspirations, undertook the

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unostentatious, but essential work of organising them.

Many of the ideas and slogans put forward by him aroused in the beginning a storm of opposition. The so-called leftists decried them as reactionary and counter-revolutionary. They heaped abuses on him. But the passage of time has proved the correctness of Comrade Roy's analysis, and every one of his ideas and slogans has been generally accepted even by those who were fiercely opposed to them. They may not admit that ; but plagiarism is not more honourable than straightforward admission of mistakes. What were in the beginning regarded as strange and reactionary, have to-day become the guiding principles of the entire national revolutionary movement.

On the very day of his release, Comrade Roy publicly stated : "Socialism or Communism—which means the same thing—is not the issue of the day." The statement was regarded as extremely heretical and as complete capitulation to the right wing. But the heresy has now become a revealed truth. Even the Congress Socialist Party, which had undertaken the utopian task of persuading

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the Congress to adopt the Socialist programme, has realised its mistake. To-day it preaches the heresy as its own wisdom.

Comrade Roy's emphasis on the National Congress and his appeal to the people of India, including the workers and peasants, to rally under its banner, earned for him abuse, disdain and hostility from the so-called leftists. For years they had learned by heart the pet dictum that the Congress is a counter-revolutionary organisation, being the political party of the bourgeoisie. They had struggled to destroy and disintegrate the Congress. They had laboured to set up new organisations as rivals to the Congress. It was a bitter pill for them, this insistence of Comrade Roy that all radicals should join the Congress, his thesis that the Congress itself must be transformed into the united front of the Indian people, his vigorous opposition to all attempts to undermine the Congress, or to set up rival organisations. They struggled hard against these ideas. Their struggle took the form of a campaign of vilification and lies. But the course of events was too strong for them. The Congress was getting stronger and stronger. Larger and larger masses were

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rallying under its banner. It was becoming more and more the one organisation of the Indian people in their struggle against Imperialism.

The course of events fully justified the line of action advocated by Comrade Roy. All the radical elements in the country have been compelled to realise the supreme necessity of concentrating efforts for strengthening the Congress and for transforming it into a consciously revolutionary people's party by the greater and greater participation of the masses in its activities.

The question of office acceptance was another bone of contention between Comrade Roy and the leftists. To oppose the acceptance of office was for a time the cardinal point of the left-wing programme and policy. Some of the leftists, notably the Congress Socialists, had gone to the length of making it the quintessence of all revolutionary fervour and activity. Comrade Roy struck out a line which was in direct opposition to the accepted creed of leftism. From the beginning, he had been of the opinion that the question of office acceptance was a minor question of tactics and strategy. When in course of his

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tours, he came in closer contact with the mass of active Congress workers, he felt that the majority favoured acceptance. Instead of organising an opposition simply for the sake of opposition, he preferred a constructive line of action. An experienced revolutionary, he could see how acceptance of office could be utilised for strengthening the Congress by organising larger and larger masses under its banner. Consequently, he came out openly in support of office acceptance, but not unconditionally. He demanded that Congressmen should accept office with a concretely formulated programme of action for implementing the election manifesto. This was obviously a revolutionary strategy appropriate for the given situation. That was clear to the right-wingers. They would not commit themselves to any concrete plan of action. Yet, the so-called leftists did not support the alternative line of action advocated by Comrade Roy, even after their opposition on principle had been defeated. Indeed, the leftists were not altogether fighting for a principle. They were more for fighting Comrade Roy than for making a united front against the right wing. In the meeting of the

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A. I. C. C., according to a previous agreement, Comrade Roy first voted for the Congress-Socialist motion advocating non-acceptance. According to the same agreement, he moved his amendment after the Congress-Socialist motion had been defeated. The Congress Socialists did not vote for his amendment ; indeed, some of them actually voted against it. Had not the agreement for united opposition to the right wing been broken by the Congress Socialists, the right wing might have been defeated and office accepted under such specified conditions as would have made the new policy fruitful as a revolutionary tactics. The Congress Socialists knew that the purpose of Comrade Roy's policy was to expose the right-wing leaders. When the question of office acceptance was discussed in the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, Masani warned the right-wingers against the "Royist manoeuvre."

Yet, Comrade Roy was branded as a rightist, as a ministerialist, as a tool of the right-wing leaders. But on this point also, the verdict of history has gone decisively in his favour. In the A. I. C. C. meeting in Calcutta, Jawaharlal Nehru admitted that

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office acceptance was producing some positive results. On that occasion, the A. I. C. C. endorsed the Working Committee resolution in favour of office acceptance. The motion was actually seconded by a member of the Congress Socialist Party which, until a few months ago, had been fiercely opposed to office acceptance on principle. So, our doctrinaire leftists, after all, are not so strict about their principles. To-day, one of them is actually serving as a Minister.

The drift towards constitutionalism, which has started in the Congress since offices were accepted, did not come as a surprise to the Royists. It was predicted by Comrade Roy as far back as 1934, when he warned the radicals against the danger. If they do not succeed in checking it, and in utilising the strategy of office-acceptance for developing the strength and the consciousness of the people, the fault will be theirs.

The controversy regarding the organisation of the Congress Socialist Party is still raging, though in a much less virulent form. The publication of Comrade Roy's letters written to the organisers of the party, must have by now cleared the mist of perversion

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and misrepresentation which was raised by the protagonists of the party. Comrade Roy's position can be summarised as follows :

The Congress Socialist Party is either an organisation of the left wing in the Congress, or a genuine Marxist Socialist party. If it is the former, then it cannot be a real Socialist party. If it is the latter, then it must adopt the plan of action and the organisational form of a Communist Party. With its present programme and organisational form, the C. S. P. tends to be a reformist Social-Democratic party. On the one hand, it does not help the organisation of the left wing in the Congress ; and on the other hand, it hinders the growth of the Communist Party.

A few Congress Socialists may not agree with this view. But all genuine Marxists have by now seen the force of this argument. As a matter of fact, not a few outstanding leaders of the C. S. P. have declared that their party is not a part of the Congress ; that it is an independent party outside the Congress ; and that, therefore, it cannot be the platform of the left wing of the Congress. If those leaders are speaking in behalf of the party, then the position of the party has com-

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pletely changed, and Comrade Roy has been fully vindicated. Once the new position is taken up by the party formally, all controversy will end. Whether the party will be a really Marxist Socialist party or not, that will be entirely its own concern. The whole controversy centred around the question whether a Socialist Party can be the platform of the left wing of the Congress. From the very beginning, the Royist said "No." The Congress Socialist differed. Now they have come around to the Royist view which they so bitterly combatted in the past. As far as we are concerned, the matter is settled.

Collective affiliation is another question of some importance on which the leftists have not yet realised the force of the Royist argument. Comrade Roy originated the demand for collective affiliation. But after mature thought and after a closer study of the structure of the Congress, he came to the conclusion that collective affiliation would, on the one hand, subordinate the class organisations of workers and peasants to the Congress, and on the other hand, weaken the Congress itself. On this point again, the decisive factor is the appreciation of the Congress. If the

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Congress is regarded as the political organisation of the masses, to be transformed into a consciously revolutionary people's party, then it cannot be permitted to become a loose federation of independent organisations. A revolutionary political party engaged in the task of leading the masses in the struggle for the conquest of power, cannot be a federation, which in any revolutionary crisis is bound to break up into pieces. These arguments have not yet received the serious attention that they deserve. Collective affiliation has been for some time an article of faith with the leftists. But one can safely prophesy that the time is not far off, when the force of the Royist arguments will be felt by all, and the demand for collective affiliation will be conveniently forgotten. As a matter of fact, the demand is no longer pressed with such a vigour as before. That is the beginning of the end.

Thus, on most points, the Royist position has now been accepted by the entire left wing, if not admittedly, certainly in practice. By his consistent fight for ideological clarification, Comrade Roy has laid the foundation for a consciously revolutionary left wing

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which can do something more than indulge in loose radical talk.

The leftists are growing in number. But they lack the clarity of vision and a sense of proportion. In the past, much of their energy was wasted in fights over remote issues and distant ideals. They lacked a plan of action and a clear perspective, which could have enabled them to raise from a lower to a higher stage and lead, the masses step by step towards the goal of political freedom and social emancipation. Instead of addressing themselves to the hard, but essential, task, the radicals were contenting themselves with revolutionary slogans and propaganda for remote ideals. On coming out of jail, Comrade Roy found himself in a difficult situation. His purpose was to build up an effective revolutionary movement, not merely carrying on agitation and propaganda, but capable of organising political action. He had to discriminate between what should be done, and what could be done, in the given situation. Consequently, he had to discountenance certain ill-conceived theories and futile forms of activity, which had become the *sine qua non* of radicalism. Having the courage of his

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conviction, and interested more in the development of the movement than in easily earned applause and cheap notoriety, Comrade Roy did that. Events have proved that his stand was correct.

Owing to the persistent propaganda carried on by his opponents, there is still some confusion and misunderstanding about the political strategy and plan of action advocated by Comrade Roy. But the course of events and his own activities are removing them rapidly. His ideas are winning an ever-increasing appreciation. The line of action advocated by him can be stated briefly as follows :

The immediate goal is the accomplishment of the national democratic revolution. This alone will pave the way for the establishment of Socialism. Socialists must, therefore, be at the vanguard of the national-revolutionary forces. These are rallied under the banner of the National Congress, which can, by the active participation of larger and larger masses of people, be transformed into an effective organ of struggle against Imperialism. The immediate task is the transformation of the Congress into a consciously revo-

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lutionary party of the people. It can be effected not by mere propaganda or criticism, but by the struggle of the masses initiated and developed on the basis of the resolutions of the Congress. Setting aside remote issues and distant ideals, though having them constantly in view, the tasks of the moment should receive the immediate attention of all revolutionaries. The best way to reaching the ideal lies through struggle for immediate issues. Agitation and propaganda alone can never win the struggle. Action is of supreme importance, and the ultimate object of all serious political action is the capture of power. We must organise the masses in action with that object. Under the given circumstances, such action can be organised only through the Congress. All revolutionaries, therefore, should join the Congress, activise its lower committees, make them the organs of mass struggle, and thus transform the entire Congress into the revolutionary party of the Indian people. That is the supreme task of the day.

This perspective of the situation and the basic conception that the decisive struggle for power shall have to be waged during the next

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few years, determined the line of action of the Royists. They are not mere utopian visionaries, who dream the dreams and sing the song of the times to come. They do not busy themselves only with agitational speeches and propagandist slogans. Comrade Roy is a practical politician, a thorough-going realist, and an experienced revolutionary, who, having visualised the task to be accomplished immediately, coolly calculates the strength of the revolutionary forces available for the purpose, and arranges the disposition of the army so that the most effective blow may be dealt to the enemy. According to him, the immediate task of the Indian revolutionaries is the organisation of all the oppressed and exploited classes for the capture of political power from Imperialism. The task is to be achieved not in an imaginary world of our choice, but in a real world of a certain given relation of classes, of objective forces and human material. To him belongs the credit of having thoroughly grasped the basic concept of Marxism, and of having evolved a line of action suitable to the immediate needs of the revolutionary movement of our country, and capable of leading

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it, step by step, to the ultimate goal of social liberation.

Side by side with the struggles on the political front for the building up of an effective revolutionary movement and for curing the radicals of their theoretical extravagances and romantic dreams, Comrade Roy has been carrying on a systematic fight on the ideological front against the reactionary notions of orthodox Nationalism. In the midst of the din of political fight, he heralds a philosophical revolution. His philosophical writings and speeches, besides revealing him as a great thinker, have contributed a good deal to the clarification of the intellectual atmosphere clouded with the mist of glorification of old traditions, the talk of the spiritual genius of our people, and the special mission of India. His merciless analysis of the reactionary character of old ideas, and his bold insistence on the necessity of learning from the experience of the Western countries, have rendered him unpopular with the mass of orthodox nationalists. But he risked that with the conviction that a revolutionary movement cannot be built up on the foundation of a reactionary ideology. The spectre

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of unpopularity or the frown of popular idols did not deter him from addressing himself to the fundamental task of the revolutionary movement of our country. With remarkable courage, he has been preaching the message of revolt,—revolt against authority, revolt against tradition, revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. The central point he always tries to drive home is that spiritual and intellectual revolt is the condition for the success of a political and social revolt. By doing that, he is laboriously building up a solid platform for the growing radical forces, while his critics are indulging in popular claptrap as the smoke-screen for opportunist politics.

Fighting single-handed on two fronts, Comrade Roy has proved himself to be a man of action, with a clear vision, a revolutionary philosophy, and the determination to practise what he preaches. In the pursuit of his plan of action for the political independence and social emancipation of the people of India, he is not to be deflected from his path either by the hostility of the right wing, or by the mischievous misrepresentation by the so-called leftists. With a supreme confidence in the

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accuracy of his analysis of the situation, and in the plan of action based on it, he has devoted himself to the task of patiently educating and silently organising the radical forces. He is not after quick spectacular results. He wants a solid organisation of the people, a disciplined army of national revolution. He knows that it is a difficult task. But there is no short-cut to a revolution. And he is nothing if not a revolutionary.

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The differences among the leftists have been a stumbling block in the way of the crystallisation of a strong united radical movement. Many honest radicals are bewildered by these differences. Being unable to find solid ground in this welter of conflicting view-points and divergent lines of action, they relapse into political inactivity, or find a safe shelter in faith in the policies and programme of the right wing. The opponents of the left wing seize upon these differences for discrediting and defeating it. Characterising them as personal squabbles and fights for leadership, they cleverly use those differences for retaining their hold on the rank and file.

The differences are regrettable; and more regrettable is the fact that the advocates of differing view-points magnify them so as to make them be insurmountable obstacles in the way of united action. It is also regrettable that controversies regarding these differences are allowed to degenerate into personal

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attacks, malicious misrepresentation and wilful perversions. But it will be wrong to suppose that those differences are due mainly to personal likes and dislikes, or are actuated by vulgar considerations of personal power and prestige. They have their roots deeper, in the evaluation of objective conditions, in the estimate of the various forces involved in the struggle, in the conception about the immediate tasks facing the national movement, and in the determination of the strategy and tactics of the movement. It will not do to dismiss these differences with a cheap sneer or an easy advice to compose them. The radicals must apply their mind to these differences and to their underlying ideological and traditional causes. They must put their weight decisively in favour of those policies and programmes best suited for leading the national liberation movement to success. That is the only way of composing those differences and of building up a united left-wing movement.

At present there are three main currents in the leftist movement, namely, the Congress Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India and the so-called Royists. A

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little consideration will show that the first can be eliminated, leaving in the field the two Communist groups, as representing essentially radical tendencies. The third group is called the "Royists" by their opponents. The appellation is used here because it has become so common, and because it brings out the significant fact that those who are so-called, follow a distinct line of action.

The Congress Socialist Party, which took its birth in 1934, represents neither a new ideology nor a new tactical approach to the national struggle. It is remarkable only as an indication of the growing dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Congress, of the differentiation of forces within the Congress, and of the radicalisation of the rank and file. Even to-day, in spite of what may be maintained in theses and claimed by the leaders, the C. S. P. does in most places represent nothing more than the incipient radical tendency within the Congress. As such, it is but natural that it should be dominated by one or the other of the consciously revolutionary Communist groups.

The party's attitude towards the struggle

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for national freedom and its organ, the Indian National Congress, originally meant nothing but the acceptance of the Royist line. It was admittedly so. On the other hand, its latter-day development into a rigid party, and its views on such problems as the Kisan Sabha, collective affiliation etc., are directly traceable to the influence of the Communist Party of India. In so far as the C. S. P. represents an independent tendency, that is, a tendency which is not influenced by either of the Communist groups, it is a reformist body, which can claim no place in a genuinely radical left-wing movement. As the Royists have left the party, and the official Communists are being weeded out of it, the reformist tendency is growing stronger and more pronounced. The C. S. P. still indulges in a good deal of radical talk. But in actual practice, it supports the right wing, working in tacit co-operation with it. With its misleading profession of being a revolutionary Marxist Socialist group, with its action hardly distinguishing itself from the right wing of the Congress, with its membership varying from convinced Marxists to sentimental, humanitarian and ambitious op-

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portunists, with its recently started crusade against the revolutionary elements in its ranks, the C. S. P. to-day is rather a disturbing factor in the left-wing movement than a genuine radical group. But for the interested support and the laboured pleadings of the official Communists, this real complexion of the C. S. P. would have been clear to the radicals long before.

The Royists and the official Communists represent essentially the same revolutionary ideology. As regards the fundamental principles of Communism, there are no differences. The bifurcation of the Communist movement in these two channels dates back to 1929, since when the ultra-left sectarian policies formulated by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International were sought to be practised in this country. During the last two years most of those disastrous policies have been rejected. They have been replaced by others which, when suggested and practised by the Royists, were condemned by the official Communists as traitorous and counter-revolutionary. The position of the Communist Party of India has changed so radically that, unless a person is

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in the know of the things that happened during 1929 to 1935, he will find it difficult to believe that the palpably absurd policies and tactics rejected recently, were at one time advocated and actually practised. But they were, and that was the reason why the Royists had to demarcate themselves from the official Communists and to strike out a different line.

The main point of difference was the attitude towards the Indian National Congress. The Royists regarded the Congress as a potentially revolutionary organisation, and stood for its transformation into an effective national revolutionary party by larger and more active participation of the masses. The official Communists on the contrary condemned the Congress as a counter-revolutionary party of the Indian capitalists. Consequently, their declared policy was to disrupt and destroy it. They stood for the formation of a new revolutionary mass organisation on the ruins of the Congress. They opposed any participation of the workers and peasants in it. They discountenanced any alliance or even united front. Down-right thorough-going opposition and hostility to the Congress

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was their motto. Even during the stormy days of 1930-1931, when Imperialism was ruthlessly suppressing the Congress, the official Communists did not fail to act up to their principles. The Royists were "counter-revolutionaries" and "traitors to the working class", because they advised the workers and peasants to join the Congress, to participate in the anti-imperialist struggle developing under its banner, and to occupy their proper place in the national revolutionary movement.

The attitude began to change in 1936, when instructions were received from abroad. Slowly and laboriously, the official Communists overcame their opposition to the Congress, and gradually reconciled themselves to the idea of workers and peasants joining the Congress. The pressure of the growing pro-Congress feeling among the masses was more responsible for that change than any deliberate thought on the part of the tacticians. But the decisive factor was the instructions received from abroad. The Seventh World Congress had gone back on the resolutions of the previous Congress. Bitter experience throughout the world had

brought about the welcome change.¹ That is the reason why the change was so uneven, irregular and spasmodic.

Even after the change, effected under pressure and for purely tactical reasons, the official Communists' attitude differs fundamentally from the Royist attitude. The latter regards the Congress as *the* organisation of the masses, as *the* organ of the national-revolutionary struggle, as *the* united national front, and stands for transforming the local Congress Committees into effective organs of struggle to develop eventually into the local organs of power. Any attempt to weaken the Congress, to lead the workers and peasants away from the Congress, to set up organisations rival to the Congress, they regard as positively counter-revolutionary. The official Communists, on the other hand, have now condescended to regard the Congress as *one* of the anti-imperialist organisations in the country. Instead of looking upon the Congress as *the* united front of the Indian people, they propose to form the united front by setting up joint committees which will re-

1. As regards the wholesome change of policy in India, the Royists had something to do with it.

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present the National Congress as well as the Trade Union Congress, the Kisan Sabhas, Youth Leagues, Students' Federations and other mass organisations. They do not now boycott work inside the Congress, but still lay more emphasis on the work outside. They pin their faith more on the organisation of the masses outside and independent of the Congress than on their integration with the Congress.

The difference in the attitude towards the Congress was mainly due to the wrong conception of the character and the tasks of the Indian revolution. To-day the official Communists, in common with the Royists, talk of the bourgeois democratic revolution and of the establishment of a democratic State. But there was a time, not very far back, when they would have nothing but the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In those days, the Royists were condemned as the "lackeys of the bourgeoisie", because by virtue of an independent study of the objective situation, they had formulated a practical line of action before the light dawned upon the official Communists. It is fortunate that even at this late

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hour the official Communists have been compelled to reckon with the real character of the impending revolution, and to abandon their romantic day-dream of making a revolution to order. But even to-day, they are not prepared to accept all the implications of the new orientation and to adapt their tactics accordingly.

There was time when they used to regard the working class as the only revolutionary factor. With the proletarian revolution as the objective, that was a correct conception. But in reality, the revolution on the order of the day was of the bourgeois-democratic nature. Consequently, the conception was wrong and worked havoc. It led to an over-emphasis on the rôle of the working class and on the forms of struggle peculiar to it. On the other hand, it led to an under-estimation of the revolutionary rôle of other classes and to a virtual neglect of work amongst them and their organisations. Recently, there has been a slight change in the attitude. But that is rather in formal writings than in day-to-day tactics and activities.

The controversy between the Royists and the official Communists regarding the leader-

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ship of the revolution hinges on this question of the relative importance of the various anti-imperialist classes in the revolutionary struggle. After having abandoned the talk of a proletarian revolution, the latter still cling to the idea of a pure unadulterated working-class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle. The Royists, on the contrary, have realised that the leadership must necessarily be a multi-class one under proletarian hegemony. This difference in the estimation of the specific weight of the various revolutionary classes involved in the struggle and in the composition of the leadership, leads to a number of differences regarding the tactics to be followed in daily activities. The Royists insist on placing before the masses a programme which will appeal to the majority, which embodies their immediate demands. The official Communists are the advocates of a pure "class programme." The Royists advocate such forms of struggle as can be appreciated and practised by the majority of the people. The official Communists pin their faith on such specifically working-class forms of struggle as the general strike. In this respect, they have blundered into a posi-

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tion which is rather syndicalist than Marxist. The presence of this anarcho-syndicalist tendency is evidenced not merely by the excessive emphasis on the slogan of the general strike. It is discernable even in their conception of the party and its relation with the masses. In the past, they ridiculed the idea of a mass Communist Party. At that time, the theory was that revolution could be brought about by an active, determined minority. This Bakuninist conception governed the actions of the official Communists both in the organisation of the party as well as in their contacts with the mass movement. Now that conception is ceremoniously disavowed. But it still continues to influence and colour all their activities.

The slogan of the Constituent Assembly was for a number of years one of the main points of difference. The official Communists looked upon the slogan as a betrayal of the workers and peasants, and as tantamount to handing over the masses to the tender mercies of the bourgeoisie. Holding such strong views on the matter, it was but natural that they should have carried on a virulent campaign against the slogan, and attempted

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to prevent any conference or meeting from lending support to it. The number of such meetings and conferences forcibly broken up by them, is legion. But all on a sudden, there was a change. From England, there came a manifesto in which the slogan of the Constituent Assembly figured very prominently as the only means of rallying the masses for a democratic revolution. The Communist Party of India had to take over the new slogan which they had opposed so vehemently until the day before. They became converts to the idea. But even then they remained far away from the correct position. According to the Royists, the demand for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is the cry for rallying all the anti-imperialist forces in the struggle for the assertion of the right of self-determination. The call for its election should serve as the signal for the decisive struggle for the capture of political power. Even to-day, the official Communists and their allies maintain that the Constituent Assembly could meet only after the capture of power. By putting forth this curious idea, they rob the slogan of all its revolutionary significance. By postponing its convocation until after the capture

of power, they confound the Constituent Assembly with the Parliament. With such curious conception about the Constituent Assembly, the slogan cannot be used for rallying the masses for the actual capture of power. What is still more significant is that the vital question—how the power will be captured—is conveniently shirked.

United front from below, dual-unionism, and the theory of social-Gandhism (the Indian term for Social-Fascism) etc., were the characteristic features of the policy inaugurated by the Sixth World Congress. The theory of Social-Gandhism led the Communist Party of India to combat the leftists in the Congress more vehemently than the rightists. It was responsible for their insane campaign of misrepresentation of such leftist leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose. Dual-unionism led them to split union after union, and also the Trade Union Congress. United front from below is a negation of the idea of united front. By scrupulously adhering to it, the official Communists acted objectively as the worst enemies of the united-front movement.

With the scrapping of those harmful doc-

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trines, there must be a change also of the tactics of the Communist Party of India. But they are finding it very difficult to adjust themselves to the new tactics recommended by the Seventh World Congress. The new tactics require fore-thought, skill and hundred times more arduous, silent and patient work. These are qualities which mere political agitators cannot be expected to possess. It is natural, therefore, that in the application of these tactics, there should be mistakes, vacillations and shortcomings.

After the Seventh World Congress, there are now *in theory* no important points of difference between the two Communist groups. In theory, the present line is completely "Royist". But the difficulty is that the line is not strictly followed. The new policy is not implemented in practice. In fact, it is not properly understood. The acceptance is mechanical, and forced. The old tradition of ultra-leftism is still strong. If the Communist Party of India could have outgrown the old spirit, if the change in outlook and tactics were effected as a result of independent thinking provoked by experience, the result would have been different. But the change

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was enforced from above as mechanically as a few years ago a diametrically opposite set of tactics was imposed also from above. Unless the Communist Party of India learns to think for itself, to judge the objective conditions independently and adopt the suitable tactics and strategy, it will not be able to apply Marxism to the theory and practice of the national revolutionary movement.

That is the merit of the Royists. They have learnt to think for themselves. They judge the situation as it is, estimate its actual revolutionary possibilities, and determine what tactics are best suited to make the situation yield the most advantageous results. They do not reject international experience or guidance. But they refuse to become mere gramophone records of certain fixed dogmas and formulas. To them, Marxism is not a sacrosanct revealed religion ; it is a growing and everchanging philosophy of life.

One of their main complaints against the Communist Party of India is that this latter functions more as a propagandist group than as a political party organising action. The C. P. of India has not yet outgrown the stage of a propagandist group. Its slogans and

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its policies are remarkably propagandistic. The Royists believe that the task of a political party is to organise the political action of the masses. They do not believe that men and conditions can be created to order. They propose to build with the available timber. This practical, realistic outlook is always present in the policies suggested by them and the line followed by themselves. That is the reason why they lay such great emphasis on work inside the Congress, why they lay so much stress on the necessity of winning confidence of the rank and file Congressmen, by the only sure method of slow and patient educational and organisational work. It is under the banner of the Congress that the forces of the national revolution are mobilised. To neglect those forces, to treat them with contempt, is to neglect the revolution itself. Practical revolutionaries cannot afford to do so ; romanticists may.

The tendency of the Communist Party of India to exaggerate the revolutionary implications of ordinary events, is an expression of romanticism. How often has it magnified an ordinary trade-union struggle into the prelude of a political general strike, a street de-

monstration into a mass revolutionary outburst ; and a passing expression of discontent into the readiness for revolt against the established order ! How often have they talked of armed clashes with the police and establishment of Soviets ! How often have they issued the call for the conversion of an ordinary industrial dispute into a political general strike ! Overestimation of the objective conditions, of the political consciousness of the working class, of the strength of the workers' organisations and of the preparedness of the masses, has always determined their policies. Consequently, they have always underestimated the forces of opposition. On various occasions, they made themselves ridiculous by issuing romantic and adventurist slogans. The most ludicrous example was the slogan issued in October 1934 for a nation-wide political general strike to be organised on the next Lenin-Day—that is, on the 21st January 1935. The object of the strike would be to enforce the "*minimum demands*" of National Independence and the establishment of a Workers, and Peasants, Government ! Agreement to that proposal was to be the condition for a united front with the rank and file of the

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Congress. Such tactics of the Communist Party of India have been condemned by the Communist International and in its own subsequent publications. But those who stood against such absurdities, when they were committed, were condemned as enemies of the revolution. The Royists had always the misfortune of being the recipients of such choice abuse. For, they had the clarity of vision and the courage of conviction to disassociate themselves from such adventurist policies.

The habit of advocating ultra-left policies has on occasions prevented the Communist Party of India from acting according to a practical idea even after it was grasped. This happened notably on the issue of office acceptance. In the party literature, they advocated the tactics of office acceptance. But at the critical moment, afraid of being criticised by their *petitebourgeois* allies, the Congress-Socialists, eager to measure up to the standard of romantic radicalism, they turned back on their own better judgement and advocated non-acceptance. The same thing is happening with regard to their attitude towards the C. S. P. In their party publications, they are

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advocating the same line as advocated by the Royists. But in practice, out of petty opportunist considerations, they are helping the C. S. P. to grow into a rigid political party. Very soon they will find it to their dismay that the C. S. P. has developed into a party, but of a type exactly contrary to their desires and expectations. At present, there are keen differences on the question of collective affiliation to the Congress and the organisation of Kisan Sabhas. They result from the fundamental difference in the attitude towards the Congress. Once the fundamental difference is removed, these and other minor points of difference will automatically disappear. The controversy revolves around one central question : How is the national revolutionary movement to be organised with the immediate object of winning democratic freedom? The Royists answer that it can be done only through the Congress, unless in the near future the relation of forces will greatly change, which does not appear to be very probable. Formerly, the official Communists proposed to build up a new mass organisation ; now they have modified their position to the extent of saying that they are prepared

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to try it through the Congress, but would not give up the right, and cease the effort, to organise the masses outside and independent of the Congress. The difference in the two points of view is obvious. That is the cause of all the other differences that separate the two Communist groups. It is a vital difference. When the two opposing armies, one of British Imperialism and the other of the national democratic revolution, are meeting in a life and death struggle, it is not permissible to demand that a part of the army should be organised separately, and that it should be withdrawn from the citadel which is the enemy's main target of attack. Yet, that is the meaning of the official Communist policy, and that is the main point of difference.

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